

Rail strike for safety and jobs

Why you should back the walkouts on the railways
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A system born of slavery

Antony Hamilton on how capitalism created racism
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OUR MESSAGE OF RESISTANCE



'WE WON'T GIVE IN TO RACISM'

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STAY
HERE TO
FIGHT
PAGES
10&11



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SCOTLAND

Yes to a new referendum

by RAYMIE KIERNAN

SCOTTISH FIRST minister Nicola Sturgeon announced on Monday that she will ask the Scottish parliament to vote next week to seek a second independence referendum.

The bold move caught Tory prime minister Theresa May on the hop and has thrilled independence supporters eager for another crack at breaking from Britain.

The Scottish National Party (SNP) and the Greens will comfortably see the vote passed at the Edinburgh parliament.

But it is by no means certain that another referendum will happen soon.

May is expected to say there can't be a vote until after a Brexit settlement is clear. This would mean 2019 or later.

Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn

SNP leader Nicola Sturgeon

has said that Labour will oppose a referendum in the Scottish parliament, but that the party won't block it at Westminster.

But Labour will then campaign to stay in the Union.

Corbyn's position is a mistake, and is likely to find few friends in the party.

Hardline opponents of independence such as Scottish party leader Kezia Dugdale will claim he is surrendering.

Labour supporters of independence will think Corbyn is repeating the basic error of 2014 when the party campaigned alongside the Tories to save the British Union.

That's a big reason why its support collapsed. Labour

>>turn to page 6



THE THINGS THEY SAY

'You talk shite, hen'

Scottish National Party MP **Mhairi Black** attacks Tory MP **Caroline Nokes** in parliament over housing benefit cuts last week

'We are going to need many more allotments'

Baroness Andrews on the dire implications of Brexit during a Lords debate last week

'She has got a man-size job to do'

Former deputy prime minister **Michael Heseltine** on **Theresa May**

'Donald Trump's state visit has the queen's chefs fretting over menus'

Fear over Trump's visit has even reached the upper echelons of society according to the **Daily Mail** newspaper

'That she should even be a Member of Parliament beggars belief'

Mail columnist **Sarah Vine** attacks Labour's shadow education secretary **Angela Rayner**

'Commie dog-munchers'

Sun columnist **Rod Liddle's** charming description of people in China



Spooks fighting to keep the British role in torture secret

THE MINISTRY of Defence and MI6 are insisting that claims made by people tortured must be heard behind closed doors.

It is the first time a law allowing civil cases to be tried in secret has been used.

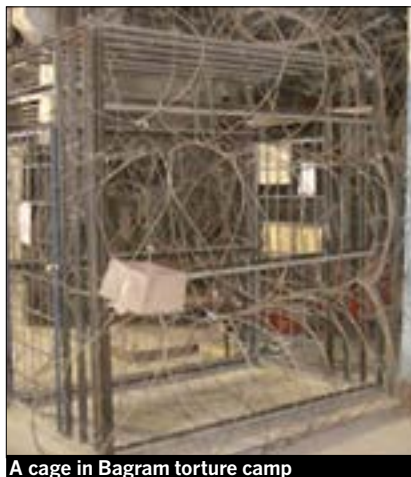
It is to prevent the extent of how much British soldiers and intelligence officers were involved in rendition torture operations from coming to light. **Yunus Rahmatullah** and **Amanatullah Ali**, two Pakistani nationals, were captured by British special forces in Iraq in 2004 and handed over to US troops.

They were held first at Camp Nama, a secret detention facility at Baghdad airport that British troops helped to run.

They were later transferred to Abu Ghraib jail before being rendered to the Bagram "black prison" in Afghanistan.

They were released without charge ten years later, in 2014.

Their capture and transfer was only disclosed to the House of Commons in 2009 by then defence secretary **John**



A cage in Bagram torture camp

Hutton. Lawyers acting for the government seized on the 2013 Justice and Security Act, which allows a judge to rule that "sensitive" material relating to "national security" can be heard in secret.

The act was brought in after the

government paid compensation to those rendered to Guantanamo Bay, in an out-of-court settlement so that the state's role in the operations would not be revealed.

The government does not want to admit the role that British special forces and spooks played in the capture and torture.

Omran Belhadi, is a lawyer at the human rights organisation **Reprieve**.

He said, "This is secrecy piled upon secrecy."

"The government is trying to cover up false intelligence, riding rough-shod over long-established principles."

Rahmatullah has described in detail his torture and abuse.

He was beaten unconscious when he was captured by British special forces in Iraq in early 2004.

He was locked in a solitary cell with rats. He was exposed to daylight in 2006 for the first time in two and a half years.

At the time Labour's **Jack Straw** called torture allegations "conspiracy theories".

MEMBERS OF the House of Lords who claim perks without doing any work will not be "named and shamed". **Lords speaker Baroness D'Souza** spent months investigating peers who collected their £300 daily allowance but did not take part in debates. One even kept a taxi running outside while signing in to collect the allowance. The Baroness shelved the probe to avoid a "press storm".



Baroness D'Souza

FORMER chancellor **George Osborne** has got a new job. Sort of. He will grab a £650,000 salary from global hedge fund **BlackRock**. But he'll only be working for around four days a month. Osborne "earned" another £786,450 last year from giving 15 speeches. He will pay a 'massive' £720 a year more tax after the budget.

Mail says sorry for antisemitism slur

THE DAILY Mail issued one of its frequent "clarifications and corrections" last week.

It referred to an article in October last year on an event organised by the **Palestinian Return Centre**.

In it the Mail said an audience member "had been applauded for saying that Jews were responsible for the Holocaust".

Its correction read, "The Centre had not invited the audience member in question and the applause followed subsequent remarks made about the boycott of Israel by

Baroness Tonge."

Previous articles attacking the PRC including one from October was headlined, "Lib Dems SUSPEND peer after she hosts 'genuinely horrifying' House of Lords event where it was claimed that **JEWS** were responsible for the Holocaust."

A correction explained that the audience applauded **Baroness Tonge** and not an audience member. But for some reason, the Mail only just got around to publishing the correction in its print edition.

Shaming of Lib Dem peer who hosted vile anti-Semites in Lords



The Mail

Only the Mayor can afford a London house

LONDON mayor **Sadiq Khan** personally intervened to push ahead part of the infamous **Haringey** redevelopment project last week.

Planning permission for the **Hale Wharf** site in **Tottenham** had previously been rejected by **Haringey** council. Khan has granted the permission for the development, part of the £2 billion **Haringey** redevelopment which will see the council demolish seven estates in the borough.

Last week it was announced 500 tenants

are being forced from their homes with no right to return as part of the redevelopment.

Khan's main campaign commitment was housing.

But his demand for new developments is that they include 35 percent "affordable" housing—and his definition of affordable is 80 percent of market rent.

"I am determined to explore all options for development across the capital," said Khan.

It's increasingly clear that doesn't include housing people can actually afford.



Sadiq Khan

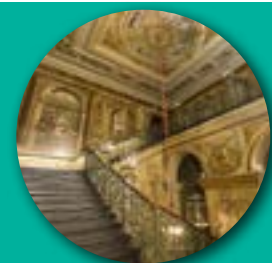
Sentimental Tory adds insult to injury

Last month Tory MP **Pauline Latham** demanded that people "stop being so sentimental" about child refugees. This month she's at it again.

Daniel Grimwood wrote to Latham after discovering some refugees trapped in a lorry. "Had we not been there some or all of these children would almost certainly have died," he wrote.

"Against this backdrop I find your speech callous and chilling in its inhumanity. It is not sentimental to hope vulnerable babies can be saved from suffocation and freezing."

Latham's response was callous and chilling, "Maybe you will be contacting your local authority and offering to foster or adopt these poor trafficked children."



TOFF OF THE WEEK

A cellar in Kensington Palace

●With space for flunkies and finery a huge new basement will make room for **William and Kate's** relocation to **Kensington Palace**.

●The 165ft-long mega-basement will see some of the 100 staff work there. It will also house a ceremonial dress collection.

●You're paying.

Liam Fox is still a really bad liar

TROUBLEMAKER favourite **Liam Fox** attempted to rewrite what he had already rewritten.

The international trade secretary vehemently denied posting a message—that was being displayed on a huge screen just over his left shoulder.

The tweet read, "The United Kingdom, is one of the few countries in the European Union that does not need to bury its 20th century history."

Fox declared "I didn't send that tweet."

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‘Going back isn’t possible’ —refugee slams new rules

by DAVE SEWELL

THE HOME Office quietly pulled the rug out from under thousands of refugees with new rules last week.

A “safe country review” five years after they are granted asylum could see them sent back to the place they fled.

Amyna, then aged 16, fled the Iraqi city of Mosul with her family and made it to Britain two years ago. The city was devastated by the US and British invasion of Iraq in 2003.

Amyna was finally allowed to stay last month. “After two years I can’t imagine going back,” she told Socialist Worker.

“In another five years what do they expect me to even remember about my country?”

People who have fled war and persecution don’t put their lives on hold forever waiting for the Home Office to make its mind up.

“I became a part of this community,” said Amyna. “I’ve made friends and built relationships. I spend my time studying and learning the language.

“But I don’t have any contact with anyone back there. For young people who come and live here it’s also very difficult to go back home now we have a different way of life.”

Implemented

Theresa May announced the review in her speech to the Conservative Party conference last year and it was implemented last week.

Previously after five years of refugee status people could automatically get the right to settle in Britain permanently.

But May has made repression of migrants and refugees her defining policy—even facing down bitter opposition to block the “Dubs amendment” scheme for unaccompanied

BRITAIN IS responsible for destroying Iraq—forcing people to go back is rank hypocrisy

refugee minors.

The whole policy is built on a lie that immigrants and refugees are a drain on resources. In reality their labour is desperately needed.

Amyna said, “They should think about whether they will need those young people in the future. Most of us will study and work.”

The safe country review adds to the asylum system’s culture of disbelief. Refugees must prove they are in danger to officials who are trained to assume they are lying.

The rules are all stacked against them.

Amyna said, “If Iraq becomes a safe place for me to live in, I will voluntarily resettle there. But safety in

that part of the world is selective.”

Britain deported dozens and denied asylum to hundreds of Iraqis last year—even as British troops return to fight in Mosul.

Hypocrisy

The hypocrisy is astounding. As a leading participant in the US-led invasion and occupation, the British state is responsible for creating the sectarian hell Iraq has become.

Amyna said, “Ever since the American invasion of 2003 Iraqis lost even the little freedom they had previously.

“Contrary to the American promise of democracy, I believe that their intentions from the beginning were

to bring us to where we are now.

“I have no hope for Iraq, and no faith in American rhetoric. Things can only get worse. Too much blood has been shed and the stream will continue.”

Welcoming refugees is one of the key demands of the anti-racist demonstrations in London, Glasgow, Cardiff and cities across Europe this Saturday. The cruel safe country review is another reason to march.

Amyna said, “Going back is not possible.”

What’s your story?

Email with your ideas
reports@socialistworker.co.uk

IN BRIEF

Protesting to end detention

PROTESTERS rallied outside two notorious detention centres last weekend to demand that these migrant prisons are shut down.

The Glasgow Campaign to Welcome Refugees protested at the Dungavel centre last Sunday.

The government dropped its promise to close Dungavel after campaigners blocked the building of a replacement.

Saturday saw a protest at Morton Hall in Lincolnshire following a series of deaths in custody there.

Racist murder by our border

A 20 year old man from Afghanistan was killed by Britain’s border regime last Saturday morning. He was trying to cross into Britain from the French port of Dunkirk.

When the lorry he stowed in went in the wrong direction, he jumped from it and later died from his injuries.

Acts love music and hate racism

ARTISTS ED Sheeran and Stormzy gave a boost to the relaunch of Love Music Hate Racism (LMHR) on Monday.

It took place alongside a last push to build for Saturday’s Stand Up To Racism demonstrations.

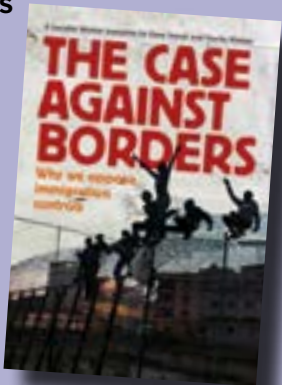
A day of action last Thursday saw thousands of leaflets handed out. A 100-strong rally in west London rounded off a nationwide series.

Go to bit.ly/2mnfoGJ for more information about LMHR

THE CASE AGAINST BORDERS

Why we oppose immigration controls

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Dave Sewell and **Charlie Kimber**

STAND UP TO RACISM NATIONAL DEMONSTRATIONS THIS SATURDAY 18 MARCH

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12 noon, Portland Place W1A 1AA

● GLASGOW

11am, Holland Street G2 4NB

● CARDIFF

11am, Grange Gardens CF11 7LJ

For more information go to standuptoracism.org.uk

IN THIS WEEK

1987

Winston Silcott sent to prison

ON 19 March 1987 Winston Silcott was sentenced for the murder of PC Keith Blakelock in the Broadwater Farm riots in 1985 despite not having been near the area.

His conviction was quashed in 1991.



MPs vote down Lords over May's Brexit bill

Tories triggering Article 50 should be a spur to fight to shape the outcome, says **Tomáš Tengely-Evans**

MPS CLEARED the way for Tory prime minister Theresa May to trigger formally leaving the European Union (EU) on Monday.

The Tories' "Brexit Bill" passed unamended after weeks of parliamentary splits and wrangling between MPs and the Lords. May can now tell EU leaders that Britain is beginning the Article 50 process of the Treaty of Lisbon, starting two years of negotiations.

With May expected to do so at the end of March, the Brexit process is firmly a reality.

May has already set out her vision for a nationalist, racist Brexit. We have to fight for a socialist, anti-racist one (see right).

At the debate MPs rejected by 335 to 281 an amendment that would have guaranteed the rights of EU migrants in Britain. Shamefully six Labour MPs, including left winger Kelvin Hopkins, supported the Tories.

The Lords then backed the MPs' decision. We can't rely on politicians to defend migrants—it will take a fight from below.

Defend

But it was important that Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn said, "We will continue to demand that they are given the right to remain."

He must resist calls to ape the right, and fight to defend freedom of movement for new migrant workers.

But the debate also highlighted the dangers of not putting forward a socialist, anti-racist vision for Brexit.

Another amendment to give parliament a "meaningful vote" on the final Brexit deal lost by 331 to 286.

This is a last-ditch attempt by right wing liberal forces determined to hamper Britain leaving the EU.

Lib Dem leader Tim Farron attacked Corbyn for giving a "blank cheque to the Conservative Brexit government".

The likes of Farron have opportunistically latched onto migrants' rights in the hope that anti-racist feeling will cohere around a neoliberal defence of the single market.

Similarly a group of right wing

BACK STORY

MPs debated Theresa May's Brexit bill parliament

- They overturned objections by the House of Lords last week
- MPs rejected guaranteeing EU migrants in Britain by 335 votes to 281
- Another amendment to give parliament a "meaningful vote" was defeated by 331 to 286 votes
- We have to use the divisions between the Tories and the bosses to help shape the outcome ahead

Labour MPs demanded that Corbyn fight for full membership of the single market (see page 6). They were led by Blairite Chuka Umunna, who favours harsher immigration controls.

The single market puts a free market straitjacket onto members. It is based on a race to the bottom and its rules bar nationalisation and other left wing policies a Corbyn-led Labour government could pursue.

The real division is not now between Leave and Remain, but those fighting to defend workers and migrants' rights and those lining up to attack them.

After being torn for months between bigotry and the demands of big business, May came down hard on the side of attacking migrants. That doesn't mean divisions among the Tories and bosses have gone away—we have to use them to shape the outcome ahead.



PROTESTING IN Parliament Square on Monday to oppose Tory attacks on EU nationals' right to remain

The European Union is not a progressive alternative

THE TORIES' and US president Donald Trump's racism and bigotry are obvious.

That's why thousands will join the Stand Up To Racism demonstrations in London, Glasgow and Cardiff this Saturday.

But the European Union is no progressive alternative.

It is a bosses' club responsible for financially squeezing the democratically-elected Syriza government in Greece. Its Fortress Europe policies have turned the Mediterranean into a mass grave of refugees.

Rotten

This rotten nature was also underlined last week. First the European Court of Justice ruled the Belgian government could refuse a visa to a family of potential Syrian asylum seekers.

This was even if the family was at risk of torture.

Then the EU did nothing when Hungarian MPs voted to lock refugees in shipping containers while their cases are decided.

And on Monday the European Court of Justice ruled that employers were entitled to ban headscarves at work.

Oppose

We have to oppose both the British government and the EU and not make how people voted on 23 June the main dividing line.

The left needs to fight hard for a Brexit that seizes the opportunities of leaving the neoliberal single market and the EU's racist immigration laws.

The Labour Party and the trade union movement need to work to fight for a socialist and anti-racist Brexit.



Sitting down to stand up for migrants' rights

LET'S FIGHT FOR A LEFT BREXIT

Defend and extend the rights of migrants and refugees.

Full and indefinite rights guaranteed now for all EU nationals. Let in all refugees, yes to freedom of movement, stop scapegoating.

No reductions in workplace, social or equality rights.

Guarantee all EU-funded social projects. End zero hours contracts. Scrap anti-union laws.

No to the single market with its restrictions on nationalisation and no to any return of the TTIP deal or any other that favours the multinationals.

Housing and health for all.

Fully fund the NHS and stop selloffs, cuts and closures. Build one million new council homes and upgrade existing stock. Control rents and replace the council tax with a local income tax that hits the rich.

Effective action on climate change, a ban on fracking and an agriculture policy focused on access to good-quality affordable food and environmental protection.

For a radical independence battle.

Brexit raises the issue of the unity of the British state. People in Scotland should have a choice on whether to stay part of it—unlinked from EU membership.

For internationalism and solidarity with workers across the world. Full support for all struggles against austerity and racism.

THE BUDGET

Bogus self-employment is the real national tax scandal

THE TORIES had a crisis and a climbdown over proposals to increase national insurance contributions (NICs) for the self-employed last week.

Self-employed national insurance contributions are to rise from 9p in the pound to 10p next year, and 11p in 2019.

But outrage from the right wing press and Tory MPs forced Theresa May to promise that the change won't take place until autumn.

Taken together with other tax changes, the rise hits some low and middle earners—anyone on over £16,250 a year.

But the biggest hit, quite rightly, is on higher earners with anyone getting over £50,000 paying a little over £600 more



Theresa May braces for the budget

tax each year.

And the real scandal in this area is an expansion of fake self-employment so that companies have to pay less.

This gives the lie to the Tories who try to pose the issues as backing up "Dragons' Den entrepreneurs".

There are "self-employed" people

in construction, education, retail, cleaning and so on who are really workers—but their bosses don't have to pay NICs for them.

These workers have far fewer rights or no rights at all to benefits, holiday pay, pensions, sick pay and employment rights.

Hammond's 'giveaways' are mere pennies and peanuts

THE SOCIAL care crisis forced Tory chancellor Philip Hammond to announce extra money for social care in last week's budget.

But the £2 billion he promised over the next three years is a drop in the ocean.

More is desperately needed in just one year than Hammond has pledged for three.

Similarly Hammond gave £100 million



Philip Hammond

to help struggling hospital A&Es.

But it comes as the Tories push through

cuts of £22 billion over three years.

There was also £1 billion for education.

Yet a third of the money was for free schools or for selective grammar schools.

Free schools are outside local authority control and drain funding from state schools. Entry to grammar schools is shaped by class.

Bashing people on benefits

A NEW raft of attacks on welfare will come into effect later this month or next month.

Hammond didn't have to announce them, because they were scheduled at the 2015 summer budget.

Working age benefit rates will remain frozen. April 2017 begins the second year of a four-year freeze.

There'll be a £30 a week cut for new Employment and Support Allowance

claimants in the work-related activity group.

This will slash around a third of the current weekly benefit, and in the long run will take £680 million a year from 450,000 people.

Extra tax credit for first child for new claims will be removed. Over the long term this takes about £2 billion a year from four million families.

Housing Benefit will be withdrawn from

most 18-21 year olds. This will hit 10,000 people a year by 2020-21.

Widowed Parents' Allowance will be replaced by a new Bereavement Support Payment for new claims. The government will stop new claims from parents who weren't married, even if they had lived together and had children.

Over 2,000 families with children could lose out each year.

Socialist Worker WHAT WE THINK

WE NEED BOLD POLITICS TO BEAT THE RACIST RIGHT

RACIST LIES dominate much of mainstream politics. But wide sections of the population are repulsed by the lurch to the right of those at the top.

Several polls have shown people want European Union (EU) citizens to have their right to stay in Britain upheld.

After decades living and working in an increasingly diverse society, the proportion of people willing to openly identify as racist has seen a long term decline.

The petition against US president Donald Trump's state visit was one of the most successful since the government launched its website.

And the Women's Marches after Trump's inauguration were the biggest international day of protest since 2003.

Of course that's only part of the picture.

The whole political scene has become centred on attacking immigration.

Lie after lie is pumped out, and a vicious regime of border fences, detention centres and deportation flights is built up.

This has empowered a racist,

nationalist right wing—from fascist Marine Le Pen in France to thugs on the streets. It has turbocharged the Islamophobia stoked up through the War on Terror.

And it has given a free pass to bosses and politicians who should rightly be reaping fury after all they have taken from us.

No one should underestimate the fight on our hands. But nor should we imagine we've already lost.

The potential is there to build a mass movement that can defy racism and the turn to the right.

Many on the left believe the best we can hope for is to change the subject from immigration, perhaps

“We shouldn't underestimate the fight on our hands—or believe we've already lost”

making a few concessions along the way. But sometimes the only realistic strategy is a bold one.

We can't defeat NHS cuts without taking on the lies about "health tourism".

We can't defeat Trump by avoiding his racism or absolving the establishment politicians whose misrule made him.

And we can't derail May's version of Brexit by defending an EU whose border controls drown thousands of Asians and Africans.

This Saturday's demonstrations can be part of building a truly immense movement—one that can win.

This requires the broadest possible unity.

It means redoubling efforts to deepen local organisation. It means building Stand Up To Racism in the workplace, and using music and other forms of culture to defeat racist ideas.

We also need to organise to fight for a socialist world.

This fight needs activists in every workplace, college and neighbourhood who will fight to turn that vision into a reality. Join us today.

You can find a Socialist Workers Party joining form on page 16

FAMINE FUELLED BY WEST

THE WORLD faces the largest humanitarian crisis since the end of the Second World War. More than 20 million people in four countries face starvation and famine, a senior United Nations (UN) official warned last week.

The emergency situation in Yemen, South Sudan, Somalia and Niger was major news for 24 hours. Then it disappeared.

One major reason is that the famines are almost entirely the result of government policies, and

the biggest culprits are the US and Britain.

The most widespread suffering is in Yemen. There, 7.3 million people do not know where their next meal will come from and 19 million are in need of humanitarian assistance.

A civil war has been raging for more than two years. The military forces of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and other monarchies control the ports.

They are stopping food from reaching the parts of the country

they do not rule. Instead of denouncing this, the US and Britain shower Saudi Arabia with arms, and the US Navy helps implement the blockade.

Millions are on the edge of death—not because of drought but because of imperialism.

Meanwhile the UN begs for £3 billion of aid to stop the deaths. Six percent of that has been pledged so far.

Is £3 billion a lot? It's what the US spends on the military every 72 hours.

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ANALYSIS

ALEX CALLINICOS



Struggles in China pay off everywhere

DOES GLOBALISATION mean a “race to the bottom”, where wages worldwide are pulled down to the levels in the poorest countries?

The economist Richard Freeman’s analysis is often used to support the idea. About a decade ago he wrote some articles about what he called “the Great Doubling”.

By this he meant the increase in the global labour force as a result of China, India and former Soviet states integrating fully into the world market.

Had they stayed outside, the global workforce would have been 1.46 billion people in 2000, Freeman argued. Including them it was double that, 2.92 billion.

He concluded that “by giving firms a new supply of low-wage labour, the doubling of the global workforce has weakened the bargaining position of workers in the advanced countries and in many developing countries as well”.

But a recent study by the research group Euromonitor shows that a much more complex process is at work.

Its results are summarised by the Financial Times newspaper, “Average wages in China’s manufacturing sector have soared above those in countries such as Brazil and Mexico and are fast catching up with Greece and Portugal after a decade of bottleneck growth that has seen Chinese pay packets treble.

“Across China’s labour force as a whole, hourly incomes now exceed those in every major Latin American state apart from Chile, and are at around 70 percent of the level in weaker eurozone countries.”

Trebled

Thus, in 2005-16, the period since Freeman first published his articles, average hourly wages in China’s manufacturing sector trebled. But they fell in Brazil, Mexico, South Africa and most steeply in Portugal—from £5.15 to £3.68 an hour.

This is a combination of three processes.

First, China has become the most important hub of global manufacturing production.

This has involved in part foreign direct investment by transnational corporations setting up subsidiaries in China. But transnationals often outsource production in the Global South to other companies, as John Smith points out in his important book *Imperialism in the 21st Century*.

The aim is to shift costs onto the subcontractors and the workers. Taiwanese company Foxconn is a classic example. It has come under much fire for how it treats its workers in the Chinese factories where they assemble Apple products.

Chinese workers’ resistance to conditions like these have helped to push up wages—not just in manufacturing but across all sectors. But Chinese industry is also becoming more sophisticated, with productivity rising faster than pay.

Manufacturing production no longer always needs to rely on ultra-low labour costs. Firms may often find it profitable to pay more to hold onto their more skilled workers.

Secondly, however, the advance of China puts pressure on manufacturing industry in other more developed Southern economies such as Brazil and South Africa.

Firms there are compressing wages to compete with cheaper and more efficient Chinese rivals.

Finally, we see similar processes in southern Europe, whose manufacturing industries compete increasingly with China and other “emerging market” economies.

This downward pressure on wages is reinforced by the austerity imposed on countries such as Greece and Portugal by the dominant forces in the eurozone. Chronic mass unemployment and shortage of demand must have contributed to the fall in Portuguese manufacturing wages.

Understanding this complex process of both upliftment and impoverishment is important if we are to stop the bosses pitting Western and Chinese workers against each other.

It’s a step forward for the entire world working class that Chinese workers have been able to triple their wages in a decade. There was nothing inevitable about this.

The Chinese state and bosses wouldn’t have reacted without pressure from the workers themselves. Nor was anything inevitable about the failure of workers’ movements elsewhere to resist wage repression.

The more we learn from each other, the more we can advance together.

Right wing Labour MPs attack Corbyn over Brexit

Backbench hypocrites who support the EU’s worst aspects but not migrant workers only deepen party’s crisis, writes Nick Clark

RIGHT WING Labour MPs had another go at undermining left wing leader Jeremy Corbyn last Sunday.

A letter to the Observer newspaper by 29 backbench MPs, led by Chuka Umunna, demanded that Corbyn defend Britain’s membership of the bosses’ single market.

Britain could leave the single market trading bloc as part of leaving the European Union (EU).

They said Labour should “fight tooth and nail” to stay in the single market, which promotes privatisation and restricts workers’ rights.

Using nationalistic language they claimed criticisms of the single market were “not worthy of a great country like ours” before going on to attack migrants.

The same Labour MPs who want to stay in the single market want to ditch its only positive aspect—freedom of movement for EU nationals.

Power

“Britain is Europe’s second largest economy, its most significant military power,” they wrote. “It should not be beyond us to conclude a deal that retains our single market membership while reforming the immigration system.”

The Labour right hopes to use the issue of the EU to divide Corbyn from his supporters, who largely voted Remain.

Corbyn rightly whipped

Labour MPs to vote for the bill to leave the EU last month. A recent article by hard right Labour faction Progress describes this as the “perfect faultline” between Corbyn and his supporters.

Their plan has no hope of solving Labour’s real problem—the long-term decline of its support.

A poll last week put Labour’s support

JEREMY CORBYN with right wing MP Chuka Umunna (above), Labour right magazine Progress (left)

19 percentage points behind the Tories. The right claim this is because Corbyn is too left wing. In reality Labour’s support began falling long before Corbyn’s leadership.

Betrayed

Labour governments betrayed working class voters’ hopes and the party’s alliance with the Tories against Scottish independence in 2014 led to its collapse in Scotland.

Supporting the single market will not bring Labour back from the brink.

Corbyn has not been able to rescue Labour’s support. Concessions to the right, who constantly undermine him, make him look like a weak leader of a divided party.

Corbyn has to be defended

against the right. But he must also confront them and focus more on the struggles against racism and austerity.

Recent speeches Corbyn made to demonstrations defending migrants and the NHS boosted him.

Putting himself at the heart of a movement against such attacks can force the right—in Labour and the Tories—onto the back foot.

The obstacles put up against him also underline the need for socialist politics that concentrate on struggles in the streets and workplaces, not on parliament.

Got a story?
Email ideas to reports@socialistworker.co.uk

Yes to a new referendum—now make it a reality

>>from page 1

should back a referendum and campaign for a Yes vote on an anti-austerity, anti-Trident, anti-racist basis.

Since 2014 support for independence has risen and there is now a fairly even split.

Socialist Worker supports the break-up of the British state.

Weakening the junior partner of US imperialism, especially in the era of Donald Trump, will be a positive thing.

But the strategy of

linking independence to membership of the bosses’ European Union (EU) and single market both weakens the fight and makes faulty assumptions.

Some 400,000 Yes voters backed Leave in the EU referendum.

And many No-voting Remainers are unconvinced that independence is the way to stay in the EU.

It will take a mass social movement to force May to hold a referendum, and then to win it.

Neither Sturgeon’s SNP nor Labour will organise

such a movement.

Working in a united way, the left helped shape the debate in 2014.

And it also inspired the idea of a radical independence.

Support for the Yes campaign began to soar when it focused on opposing cuts to public services and economic policies that are pursued by the neoliberal EU.

That, along with resolute opposition to racism and welcoming migrants and refugees, must be the starting point this time.

Scottish first minister Nicola Sturgeon on Monday

Hospitals rationing care rapped—but not funded

NHS bosses have told local trusts to stop denying hip operations. But the Tories' STP plans insist they make cuts, reports **Tomáš Tengely-Evans**

NHS ENGLAND has told local health bosses to stop rationing services to patients living in pain.

Hospitals have been told to stop cutting some services—but haven't been given extra funds.

West Midlands health bosses are denying care to slash costs.

Three clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) drew up plans in January to deny hip and knee replacements unless pain stopped patients from sleeping or carrying out daily tasks.

Under pressure from the royal colleges, the NHS has now said that CCGs should follow central rationing guidelines.

While this intervention is welcome, it will not solve the problem of local health bosses introducing rationing in response to runaway deficits.

This is just the latest sign of how the NHS crisis is hitting patients.

Years of budget cuts and privatisation, combined with the decimation of local authority-run social care, are pushing the health service past breaking point.

Slash

This will only be made worse by the Tories' new plans to slash hundreds of hospital departments and services across England.

Dividing England up into 44 "footprints", the Sustainability and Transformation Plans (STPs) aim to slash £22 billion under the guise of improving patient care.

They claim that they're "centralising" and "consolidating" services for clinical, not financial reasons.

But while some specialised procedures, such as dealing with stroke patients, are best done in larger hubs, the Tories' plans are for wholesale cuts.

An eight year old boy died from a heart attack last month after being taken to Worcestershire Royal Hospital.

Callum Cartlidge lived just 1.9 miles from Alexandra Hospital near Redditch, but was driven 21 miles to Worcester.

Cuts to the Alexandra's accident and emergency (A&E) department mean ambulance crews are now instructed not to take children there.

If the Tories successfully push through the STPs, there will be more avoidable child deaths.

Another part of the STPs is shifting the burden onto "primary care" that's provided in the community.

But social care has already been decimated—and GP services are



PROTESTERS OUTSIDE the Home Office on Monday

PICTURE: SOCIALIST WORKER

Protesters demand justice for Orgreave

by **SADIE ROBINSON**

HUNDREDS OF protesters gathered outside the Home Office in London on Monday to demand justice over the Battle of Orgreave.

Campaigners brought drums, vuvuzelas, whistles and pots to the "make some noise for Orgreave" demonstration.

Police attacked striking miners at the Orgreave coking plant in Sheffield in June 1984, during the Miners' Strike. They then framed 95 miners for riot.

Home secretary Amber Rudd last year ruled out an inquiry into the policing of Orgreave.

Joe Rollin from the Orgreave

Truth and Justice Campaign told Socialist Worker, "I'm really happy with the turnout.

"Amber Rudd hoped that this would all go away when she said there wouldn't be an inquiry. Today shows it won't."

Solidarity

Shadow home secretary Diane Abbott brought a message of solidarity from Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn.

"The Labour Party will not rest until you get a full public inquiry," she said.

Activists from other campaigns brought solidarity.

Sheila Coleman from the Hillsborough Justice Campaign told Socialist Worker,

"Hillsborough and Orgreave are inextricably linked.

"If South Yorkshire Police had been dealt with after Orgreave, we wouldn't have had the cover-up over Hillsborough. But their behaviour was sanctioned from the top."

Newly released documents from 1985 show that Margaret Thatcher's government was desperate to avoid an inquiry into the policing of the strike.

Joe said the papers show that those at the top "are absolutely terrified about collective action".

But he said the policing plan for Orgreave, among other files, have yet to be released.

facing large budget cuts.

Over 100 hundred people attended a meeting in Slaithwaite, near Huddersfield, on Saturday to protest against plans to slash their GP surgery's budget by 44 percent.

These plans come as the CCG is trying to axe Huddersfield Royal Infirmary's A&E—under the rationale of providing care closer to home.

Campaigns like those in

Slaithwaite show the potential to resist the Tories' assault on the NHS.

The magnificent 200,000-strong national demonstration for the NHS showed how we can bring those fights together.

A regional demonstration for the NHS in Leeds has been called on Saturday 1 April to build on that potential.

Their local Kirklees council is

among 26 local authorities that have already refused to sign up to the STPs—a major roadblock for the Tories.

Campaigns can push more local authorities to refuse to sign up to them.

On other pages...
The fight for safety on trains escalates >>>Page 20

ROTHERHAM ABUSE

Cops have 'no case to answer'—just 'failings'

SOUTH YORKSHIRE Police (SYP) officers have "no case to answer" regarding over 200 allegations relating to their handling of child sexual abuse in Rotherham, the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) has decided.

Allegations against officers date back to the early 1990s and include failing to act on complaints and corruption.

The IPCC last week said it had found evidence of "significant failings" but "no misconduct". A further 53

Cops allegedly failed to report abuse

investigations are ongoing. Some 40 complainants have made 211 separate allegations.

A total of 91 police officers have been identified. Another 120 allegations relate to officers "who have yet to be identified".

The 2014 Jay Report found evidence that police in Rotherham refused to act on children's complaints of abuse and blamed the victims.

IPCC deputy chair Rachel Cerfontyne said there was a "culture of inaction" when officers were accused of abuse. But she said the inquiries shouldn't be a "scapegoating exercise of junior officers".

"We have found that sometimes they were doing stuff that was not right or not taking action," said Cerfontyne. "But this had more to do with the culture in the force at the time."

Some 187 investigations were ongoing across England and Wales as of last November, covering 18 police forces.

Some included claims that investigations of alleged abuse were shut down because the suspects were politicians.

FIGURE IT OUT

91 cops identified in complaints over the handling of abuse in Rotherham

53 cases are still being investigated

Anti-racists prepare for protest in Amsterdam

State austerity and racism have boosted the racist Geert Wilders in the Netherlands, says Dave Sewell

THOUSANDS OF anti-racists were set to march through Amsterdam in the Netherlands on Saturday. The protest will take place after elections in which the far right racist Geert Wilders was expected to do well.

The general election on Wednesday was unlikely to return an overall winner.

Wilders' Freedom Party has gained from bitterness at the austerity imposed by the current Tory-Labour coalition—and its concessions to racism.

Ewout Van Der Berg, national coordinator of the International Socialists group, is part of the organising committee for Saturday's anti-racism demonstration.

He told Socialist Worker, "If Wilders does form a government it will be drastic. He has campaigned to ban the Koran, close down mosques and return refugees."

"His success will strengthen the racists who put his ideas into action."

Wilders split from the Tory VVD party in 2004 to pursue a more openly racist agenda.

But Ewout said, "VVD prime minister Mark Rutte has also run a racist 'Wilders-lite' campaign."

"He recently wrote in major newspapers saying that if people from ethnic minorities weren't happy in the Netherlands they should leave."

Race

He added, "The election has been presented as a race between Rutte and Wilders, and that strengthens them both. But there's a real possibility they could govern together."

They have entered coalition talks together before in 2010. And Rutte's government threw him a lifeline last week.

It expelled a Turkish minister from the country after Wilders had said Dutch Turks don't belong in the country. But there is opposition.

"Whenever Wilders tries to go out on the street there are protests, not usually big but militant and loud," said Ewout.

BACK STORY

A general election will be held in the Netherlands this week

- The fascist Freedom Party, led by Geert Wilders, was expected to do well
- Wilders has gained from anger at the austerity imposed by the current Tory-Labour government
- There is a danger that Wilders could govern alongside this coalition after Wednesday's poll
- But there is opposition—and thousands of anti-racists were set to protest on Saturday

"There were a lot of protesters when he campaigned in his home town Heerlen last Saturday. He's had to cancel a lot of appearances. And he has weaknesses."

"The Freedom Party has no organisation and Wilders is its only real member."

Anger at the rise of the right hasn't translated into votes for either the Labour Party or the more radical left Socialist Party.

Driving

Ewout said, "Labour has been driving the agenda of austerity."

"That includes privatising social housing, increasing healthcare and university costs, and making the Netherlands the record-holder for 'labour market flexibility' in the European Union."

"And the Socialist Party has adapted to the racism of the right instead of resisting it, arguing for keeping out migrant workers."

But a 15,000-strong women's march last Saturday was the biggest demonstration in the Netherlands for two years, and the anti-racism demonstration could be bigger.

Ewout said, "The alternative is on the streets."



More online

The fight against racism is international bit.ly/2n0kIDD



ACTIVISTS TOOK to the streets last Friday to celebrate Park's impeachment

PICTURE: WORKERS' SOLIDARITY

Celebrations in South Korea after protests force out president Park

OPPOSITION ACTIVISTS in South Korea are celebrating the Constitutional Court's unanimous decision by eight judges to uphold the impeachment of president Park Geun-hye.

Acting chief justice Lee Jung-mi announced the verdict on Friday of last week, saying Park had "seriously impaired the spirit of democracy and the rule of law".

She added, "Her actions betrayed the people's confidence. They are a grave violation of law, which cannot be tolerated."

The decision is wholly the result of pressure from mass demonstrations and strikes.

Park has called her supporters onto the streets in recent weeks.

Her lawyer said during a court hearing that "there will be blood on the road" if judges ratified the impeachment.

South Korea is a close ally of US imperialism and treats trade unionists and activists harshly.

In October last year more than 20 trade union leaders and activists were in prison.

The government recently announced the sacking of 89 rail workers for participating in a two-month strike that powered the

movement in its early phase.

But repression has not saved Park. She was suspended as president after a vote in parliament to impeach her last December. It followed revelations of her corruption, and further exposures have weakened her position.

Millions of people in South Korea have taken part in the movement to oust her.

Arrested

The de facto leader of the giant Samsung corporation, Lee Jae-yong, was arrested last month.

The Special Prosecutor announced on Monday of last week that Park had colluded with her friend Choi Soon-sil to receive bribes of £30 million from Samsung.

But the Constitutional Court still had to ratify her impeachment.

Protesters have taken to the streets 20 times to demand Park's removal since October. Over 15 million people have taken part.

The anti-Park movement started on the initiative of the left and militant trade unionists. Ilboong Choi is from Workers' Solidarity, Socialist Worker's sister paper in South Korea. He told a meeting

in London this week, "The movement grew incredibly fast. On 3 December 2.3 million people joined demonstrations across the country."

"Organised workers in the KCTU union federation played an important role by attending protests and holding a one-day general strike."

Park's removal is a great victory, and an expression of workers' power. There will now be a presidential election, probably on 9 May.

Park could face criminal charges.

The mainstream parties will focus all their attention on this.

But the left is arguing to keep up protests in the workplaces and the streets. It wants to fight to scrap labour "reforms", demand better wages and conditions, oppose the US missile defence system and defend education—as well as demand political change.

Workers' Solidarity said, "The movement should be maintained after the impeachment. We must get rid of Park's policies as well as Park. Workers should take advantage of these political opportunities to struggle."

No to lies over trans

BBC WOMAN'S Hour presenter Jenni Murray recently declared that trans women are not "real women".

Murray believes that trans women have had "male privilege" and "do not know what it is like to be a woman".

But a huge number of studies show that gender identity is formed during childhood.

Many "radical" feminists believe that children born with "male" bodies are inherently socialised to have privilege and power.

But there is nothing inherent about gender roles, male dominance and female subordination.

Ideas about gender roles are products of capitalist society. The vast majority of human history shows a much more complex picture.

Julie Webster
Nottingham

■ THERE IS a biological difference between men and women, based on the fact that women have two X chromosomes, and men an X and a Y.

Yet to reduce things in this way risks simplifying a very complex situation.

Men with Klinefelter's Syndrome have two X and one Y chromosome. Women with Turner's Syndrome have only a single X chromosome.

The idea that "natural" women form one group, and trans women another seems odd. Does a working class woman have more in common with Princess Diana, or with a working class man contemplating gender reassignment?

John Parrington
Oxford



ILLUSTRATION: TIM SANDERS

Stuff the bigoted Daily Mail and decriminalise abortion

THE DAILY Mail newspaper complains that Marie Stopes' doctors are effectively providing abortion on demand by certifying women for the procedure without actually seeing them.

It claimed that their call centre workers "rubber stamp a decision that some women regret for the rest of their days".

The truth is that most women do not experience psychological problems or regret their abortions—and those who do tend to be women with a prior history of depression.

No other medical or surgical procedure in Britain requires the endorsement of one, let alone two doctors, as abortion does, before it

can be carried out. For everything else all that is required is the consent of the patient.

The Daily Mail should come clean about its real agenda, which is to chip away at the existing law and make it harder and harder for women to access safe abortion.

They bleat about Marie Stopes receiving public money when the scandal is that charities are needed to provide abortion at all.

There should be sufficient capacity within the NHS.

Affluent women have always been able to access abortion relatively safely, whether it is legal or not.

Working class women understand that the legal right to

abortion is hard won and that their lives have depended on it.

Abortion should be decriminalised, just as it has been in Canada. It is the woman's right to choose.

There was a fantastic demonstration in Dublin on International Women's Day last week (see page 17).

It demanded the repeal of the eighth amendment, which equates the life of a pregnant woman with that of a foetus.

This is the sort of action we need to take to oppose the likes of the Daily Mail and make decriminalisation a reality.

Jackie Turner
GP, East London

Trump supports Israel but is no friend of Jews

SUPPORT FOR Donald Trump from antisemites has begun to open serious discussions among Jewish people—even some of those who strongly support Israel.

What has gone almost entirely unremarked outside Jewish newspaper's in Britain is a letter signed by almost 200 young Jews.

It included members of prominent pro-Israel groups the Jewish Board of Deputies and the Jewish Labour Movement.

The letter condemned the congratulations sent to

Trump by Jonathan Arkush, president of the Board of Deputies, as "beneath contempt" and "laughable".

It demanded the Board of Deputies retract the "congratulations".

In the US we have seen inspiring examples of unity between Jews and Muslims despite differences of principle over Palestine.

We need similar initiatives in Britain in the run-up to Trump's state visit.

Rob Ferguson
East London

Welsh language should be defended

MARTIN Chapman writes (Letters, 1 March) about the situation in Ysgol Llangennech in Llanelli.

At present the school is "dual stream". The majority of children receive a bilingual education—Welsh medium with lessons in English.

A declining minority receive a monoglot English medium education. In response to the wishes of the majority of parents, the school will become solely bilingual from September 2017.

The Plaid Cymru-led



A bilingual sign in Wales

Camrathen county council made the decision. A small group of Labour councillors campaigned along with Ukip AMs to oppose it.

The village of Llangennech has huge

significance in the decades-long struggle for civil rights for Welsh speakers.

Here in the 1950s Eileen Beasley and her husband Trefor were persecuted for refusing to pay council tax bills unless they were issued in Welsh.

Their eventual victory inspired decades of protests and campaigning.

These have led to a modicum of basic legal recognition being granted to the language.

Richard Morse
Torfaen, South Wales

Just a thought...

We will fight to save NHS

HUDDERSFIELD'S Hands off Huddersfield Royal Infirmary campaigners led the NHS march!

We won't stop until we've won!

Mac Andrassy
on Facebook

■ IT IS nice to walk side by side with fellow immigrants and the British public to fight against the privatisation of the NHS.

Araial Ilustre
on Facebook

The Tories got Blair in office

TONY BLAIR got kind of lucky that the Tories went through a few leaders who lacked any charisma or talent (Must Labour move right, 8 March).

Iain Duncan Smith? Labour could've stood some unbaked bread dough and still won elections at that point.

Ben Rice
on Facebook

■ I DON'T think it mattered who was leader. The country had had enough of Tory rule.

Brenda Poole
on Facebook

Why I cannot back Labour

I AGREE with the Socialist Workers Party's decision to suspend its membership of the Trade Union and Socialist Coalition (Socialist Worker, 8 March).

However I won't be voting Labour here in Durham following the council's treatment of teaching assistants.

If they want votes, ditch the shit councillors and put up proper candidates.

Peter Kelly
on Facebook

Boss beaten over sexism

IN MY workplace last week I suggested we celebrate International Women's Day (IWD).

Our manager asked if we were going to have an International Men's Day.

One female workmate replied, "Every day is International Men's Day"—to raucous laughter.

We ended up celebrating IWD.

Workers 1, management 0.

Tim
Norwich

Theresa May thinks migrants, Muslims and minorities make good scapegoats—but they are central to the resistance to her agenda. Ten activists from around Britain who will be marching this Saturday told Socialist Worker why they will not be moved

'If they build a wall we'll jump over it'

BIRMINGHAM activist Ake Achi came to Britain as a child from Ivory Coast. Today he runs the Right2WorkUk campaign on the effects of immigration law at work.

"We're blamed for everything, it's always the same line," he said. "We've been in this country working and contributing and we're being treated like we're nobody. We have the government deporting us and the justice system discriminating against us."

A raft of contradictory new bureaucratic requirements has been brought down on the 2.9 million European Union (EU) citizens in Britain.

"We've become part of the fabric

of this society," said Wiktor Moszczynski, a west London activist for the 3 Million campaign.

"We were told we had rights, and now we're being told we might not be able to stay."

EU migrants who had automatic right of residence are now being told to account for all the time they've lived in Britain, among other requirements.

"Eastern Europeans have had to put up with hostility for years," said Wiktor. "It comes from papers such as the Daily Mail, Express and Sun, or from people shouting 'go home' if they hear you speaking Polish."

"What white Europeans face is nothing compared to what black people face—we are less visible to racists. But there's often a view that it's more acceptable to slander us, that because we're white it isn't racist."

"And by refusing to guarantee our rights the government is empowering the perpetrators."

Sumbul Ahmed, a student at Huddersfield University and a Socialist Workers Party activist, said politicians' attacks on

immigration have "had an impact on me".

"Sometimes there are people there talking about why they support policies against immigration, having a big debate about Muslims," she said. "They'd say, 'all these people coming here, we don't have enough to go around as it is'."

"They've experienced cuts, they've been robbed. But instead of looking at the people who are really to blame they're looking at who they are told to blame. It's sad."

But the government isn't having it all its own way.

Wiktor said, "Public opinion is basically that those who are here should be able to stay. That sense of fairness is something we can work with."

For Ake, "They don't have a clue. They pass policies to regulate immigration but no matter what they do it won't stop. The things that push people to come are stronger than a wall."

"If they build a ten-foot wall we're going to jump over it, if they build a 20-foot wall we'll dig a

tunnel under it, if they build a wire fence we'll cut and go through it."

"Now British people are starting to realise that the attacks on migrant workers are unfair. We're not alone anymore, and anything is possible."

The demonstration can strengthen that unity.

Sumbul said, "I'm looking forward to the demonstration, and I'm taking my dad with me. It's going to be a communal vibe, everyone fighting for the same cause. People question what protests achieve, but they have an effect on those around us and on attitudes in society."

"Lobbying isn't enough—it takes something more forceful."



Sumbul Ahmed
Student



Wiktor Moszczynski
3 million



Ake Achi
Right2WorkUk

'Make life uncomfortable for those pushing hate'

SUCCESSIVE governments have demonised and criminalised Muslims, in particular through the Islamophobic "Prevent" strategy. Muslims have been reported as at risk of "radicalisation" for the most trivial reasons and encouraged racists.

SUTR campaigner Nahella Ashraf was attacked by a racist who tried to remove her hijab earlier this year. "The government points the finger at Muslims, tries to get people to turn on

each other through the 'othering' of Muslims," she said.

"What happened to me—and has happened to many other Muslim women—is a manifestation of that racism."

Muslim youth activist Imran Shah said the stakes are high.

"We've seen through history how bigotry has been used to keep the masses in line."

"Today it's against Muslims, and for me that's mainly a result of the war on terror."

"The people behind Prevent are the same people who would once have said vote Tory unless you want a black neighbour. Before that their target was Jews."

"If we don't start making it uncomfortable for the people pushing that hate, we could see a repeat of what happened in the last century." But the protests following

Donald Trump's inauguration gave him hope. Imran said, "I didn't want the Brexit vote and I didn't want Trump elected."

"But without them this would have kept simmering underground. Instead it's come to the surface."

"So in a way it's an

opportunity for the left to mobilise people against it."

"The challenge is to get the left mobilising across Europe, because Marine Le Pen and Geert Wilders could be much more dangerous than Trump."

Manchester GP Siema Iqbal has seen the effects of Prevent firsthand.

And she has been building the resistance by speaking at meetings for Muslim Engagement and Development (Mend).

"We need to stop the government propagating

fear and division by holding them to account," she said.

"Whether it's through protests, campaigns, writing to MPs or challenging the media, we have to counter the racist narrative."

"I'm marching because any form of racism isn't one community's problem."

"It's a societal problem and only unity will drive out the hatred."

"Courage breeds courage and that's what happens when we march together."

"We give strength to others to use their voices too."



Siema Iqbal
Doctor



Nahella Ashraf
Stand Up To Racism



Imran Shah
Youth organiser



'Trade unions can shape the outcome'

MANY UNIONS are backing the demonstration, but they could do far more. Construction worker Jacek Szymanski will be among those leading a contingent of EU citizens on Saturday's march in London, assembling at the Polish Embassy.

He said, "There is a lot of solidarity in the wider population, and in that there is hope."

"But it is very difficult at my workplace. Union members have permanent contracts and they see agency workers like myself as a threat."

"And since most of the agency workers are migrants it turns into broader discussions about how migrants are taking the jobs of British workers."

Jacek's union, Unite, is among those backing Saturday's demonstration.

But Jacek said, "I'm very disappointed in my union."

"We try to argue that we are all affected by management's policies, that

they are trying to turn against each other. But it's very difficult to get this argument across."

Central London academic Lucia Pradella organised a campaign to defend free movement after her union, UCU, was "slow" to take a stand.

It has led to many branches and the national executive to vote to back free movement for EU migrants.

"Union leaders have created this idea that workers are against immigration to justify their inactivity," she said. "But the vast majority of people supported our motion."

Some 16 percent of academic staff in Britain are EU nationals. So are about

12 percent of hospitality and tourism workers, 10 percent of doctors and 4 percent of nurses.

Lucia said, "Discriminating against such a big group of workers will put pressure on working conditions for all workers in those sectors."

"So any argument for immigration controls

will damage the interest of British workers."

"Secondly, given the diverse make-up of the workforce there is very big potential in the unions for resistance."

"There are all kinds of contradictions in what the government is trying to do."

"It will be very difficult for them to make everyone apply for residence."

"It would also be very unpopular—most people who voted to Leave the EU didn't want it to affect people here."

"Unions must not be passive or make concessions."

"They should try to shape the outcome."



Lucia Pradella
Lecturer



Jacek Szymanski
Agency worker

'We contribute through our struggles'

LENIN ESCUDERO, Unison union rep for cleaners at Soas university in London, is bemused by claims that migrants are taking jobs or driving down wages.

"When we came here in the 1980s and 1990s, there were no English people taking these jobs," he said. "We came here to survive. But there was so much exploitation that we organised in a union to fight for dignity, justice and respect."

"So far we have won union recognition, the London Living Wage, pensions, holidays and sick pay, and inspired outsourced workers in other universities."

"And now the conditions are better, English people are coming to work with us."

"Our struggle is making things better for everyone."

"Whose job am I taking? We are creating job opportunities!"

Many Soas cleaners are affected by the

attacks on EU migrants directly as Latin Americans on Spanish passports.

Lenin said, "It was the government, the capitalists and the bankers who caused the financial crisis, but they blame us because they want to divide people."

Amira Taha is one of 17 Salford council

workers coming to the demonstration together.

She said that communicating with friends in her native Egypt made her feel like she was part of its 2011 revolution.

"Before 2011 it seemed impossible that the tyrant Hosni Mubarak would leave," she said.

"Of course, the

system was more than one man, and the system managed to come back."

"But what happened in Egypt is an example of what people can achieve and a warning to focus on the real enemy and not fall into traps."

That shapes her outlook today.

"I hope there will be some end to racism, but that's wishful thinking unless we do something about it," she said.

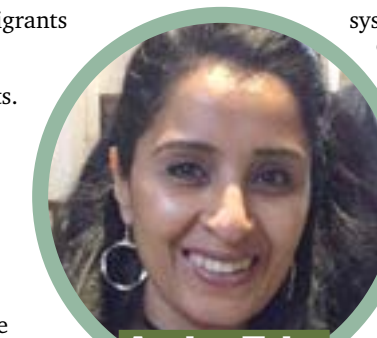
"It's like moaning about your workplace but not joining the union."

"It's important to show numbers. It's easier for them to belittle our cause if they don't see us marching."

"And for those who support our cause, marching makes us feel less alone."

"Authority is powerful, but people have more power."

To get involved in Stand Up To Racism go to standuptoracism.org.uk



Amira Taha
Council worker



Lenin Escudero
Unison union rep

WHAT WE STAND FOR

These are the core politics of the Socialist Workers Party.

INDEPENDENT WORKING CLASS ACTION

Under capitalism workers' labour creates all profit. A socialist society can only be constructed when the working class seizes control of the means of production and democratically plans how they are used.

REVOLUTION NOT REFORM

The present system cannot be patched up or reformed as the established Labour and trade union leaders say.

It has to be overthrown. Capitalism systematically degrades the natural world. Ending environmental crisis means creating a new society.

THERE IS NO PARLIAMENTARY ROAD

The structures of the present parliament, army, police and judiciary cannot be taken over and used by the working class. They grew up under capitalism and are designed to protect the ruling class against the workers.

The working class needs an entirely different kind of state—a workers' state based upon councils of workers' delegates and a workers' militia.

At most parliamentary activity can be used to make propaganda against the present system.

Only the mass action of the workers themselves can destroy the system.

INTERNATIONALISM

The struggle for socialism is part of a worldwide struggle. We campaign for solidarity with workers in other countries.

We oppose everything which turns workers from one country against those from other countries.

We oppose racism and imperialism. We oppose all immigration controls.

We support the right of black people and other oppressed groups to organise their own defence. We support all genuine national liberation movements.

The experience of Russia demonstrates that a socialist revolution cannot survive in isolation in one country.

In Russia the result was state capitalism, not socialism. In Eastern Europe and China a similar system was later established by Stalinist parties. We support the struggle of workers in these countries against both private and state capitalism.

We are for real social, economic and political equality of women. We are for an end to all forms of discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

We defend the right of believers to practise their religion without state interference.

THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

To achieve socialism the most militant sections of the working class have to be organised into a revolutionary socialist party.

Such a party can only be built by activity in the mass organisations of the working class.

We have to prove in practice to other workers that reformist leaders and reformist ideas are opposed to their own interests. We have to build a rank and file movement within the unions.

To join us, turn to page 16 or go to www.swp.org.uk or phone 020 7840 5602 for more information

{ SOCIALIST WORKER } PUBLIC MEETINGS

LEEDS: CITY CENTRE

Russia 1917—workers' revolution and festival of the oppressed

Sat 25 Mar, 7pm,
The Swarthmore
Education Centre,
2-7 Woodhouse Square,
LS3 1AD

MANCHESTER

Russia 1917—workers' revolution and festival of the oppressed

Sat 25 Mar, 7pm,
Mechanics Institute,
103 Princess St,
M1 6DD

{ SOCIALIST WORKER } BRANCH MEETINGS

Weekly meetings to discuss political issues and our local interventions. All welcome.

BARNLEY

Deliveroo, Uber and the gig economy—has the working class disappeared?

Thu 16 Mar, 7pm,
YMCA, Blucher St,
S70 1AP

BIRMINGHAM: CITY CENTRE

Why socialists oppose all borders

Wed 22 Mar, 7pm,
Birmingham LGBT Centre,
38/40 Holloway Circus,
B1 1EQ

BRADFORD

The fight for LGBT+ liberation

Thu 16 Mar, 7pm,
Glyde House,
Little Horton Lane
(opposite the ice rink),
BD5 0BQ

BRIGHTON

Palestine—one or two state solution?

Thu 16 Mar, 7.30pm,
Friends Meeting House,
Ship St,
BN1 1AF

BRISTOL

The Grunwick strike—how migrant workers fought the bosses

Wed 22 Mar, 7.30pm,
YHA, 14 Narrow Quay,
BS1 4QA

BURNLEY AND PENDLE

Syria—revolution, counter-revolution and civil war

Wed 22 Mar, 7.30pm,
Red Triangle Cafe,
160 St. James's St,
BB11 1NR

CAMBRIDGE

Why socialists oppose all borders

Thu 23 Mar, 7.30pm,
River Lane Centre,
River Lane,
CB5 8HP

CARDIFF

Why socialists oppose all borders

Wed 22 Mar, 7.30pm,
Cathays Community Centre,
Cathays Terrace,
CF24 4HX

CHESTERFIELD

Why won't the Tories fund the NHS?

Thu 16 Mar, 7.30pm,
Chesterfield Library,
New Beetwell St,
S40 1QN

COVENTRY

Does immigration reduce workers' wages?

Wed 22 Mar, 7.30pm,
West Indian Centre,
159 Spon St,
CV1 3BB

DUDLEY

Why we are against all immigration controls

Wed 22 Mar, 8pm,
The What Centre,
23 Coventry St,
Stourbridge,
DY8 1EP

Why we need a revolution to end racism

ABERDEEN

Wed 22 Mar, 6pm,
Belmont Cinema Cafe,
49 Belmont St, AB10 1JS

COLCHESTER

Wed 22 Mar, 7.30pm,
The Odd One Out,
28 Mersea Rd, CO2 7ET

DUNDEE

Wed 22 Mar, 7.30pm,
Dundee Voluntary Action,
10 Constitution Rd,
DD1 1LL

LONDON: BRIXTON

Wed 22 Mar, 7pm,
Vida Walsh Centre,
2b Saltoun Rd (off Windrush
Square, near Effra Rd),
SW2 1EP

LONDON: EALING

Thu 23 Mar, 7.30pm,
Y Lounge,
YMCA West London,
25 St Mary's Rd, W5 2RE

LONDON: LEWISHAM

Wed 22 Mar, 7.30pm,
West Greenwich Community
and Arts Centre,
141 Greenwich High Rd
(near Greenwich main
line and DLR station),
SE10 8JA

EDINBURGH

Not traditionally submissive—women and Islam

Wed 22 Mar, 7.30pm,
Friends Meeting House,
7 Victoria St,
EH1 2JL

GLASGOW

Populism and fascism—how do we stop the rise of the far right?

Thu 23 Mar, 7pm,
Avant Garde, 33-44 King St,
Merchant City, G1 5QT

HARLOW

Why socialists oppose all borders

Thu 23 Mar, 7.30pm,
Friends Meeting House,
1 Church Leys,
CM18 6BX

HUDDERSFIELD

Populism and fascism—how do we stop the far right?

Wed 22 Mar, 6.30pm,
Brian Jackson House,
2 New North Parade (near
both train and bus stations),
HD1 5JP

HULL

A rebel's guide to Trotsky

Thu 16 Mar, 7pm,
Cafe licious,
104 Cottingham Rd,
HU6 7RZ

LEEDS: CITY CENTRE

What is class?

Thu 16 Mar, 7pm,
The Swarthmore
Education Centre,
2-7 Woodhouse Square,
LS3 1AD

LEICESTER

Russia 1917—workers' revolution and festival of the oppressed

Wed 29 Mar, 7pm,
Leicester LGBT Centre,
15 Wellington St, LE1 6HH

LONDON: BRENT AND HARROW

What does Trump's election mean for Palestine?

Thu 16 Mar, 7.30pm,
The Pepperpot Centre,
1a Thorpe Close,
Ladbroke Grove, W10 5XL

LONDON: CENTRAL

Abortion—why we defend a woman's right to choose

Thu 16 Mar, 7pm,
Room 130, UCL,
Foster Court Building,
Gower St, WC1E 6BT

LONDON: HACKNEY

Fake news—who controls the media?

Thu 16 Mar, 7.30pm,
The Round Chapel,
2 Powerscroft Rd (corner of
Lower Clapton Rd), E5 0PU

LONDON: HARINGEY

Fake news and alternative facts—media in the 21st century

Wed 22 Mar, 7.30pm,
St John Vianney Church Hall,
386 West Green Rd (corner
Vincent Rd), N15 3QH

LONDON: ISLINGTON

Fake news and alternative facts—the media today

Thu 16 Mar, 7pm,
The Old Fire Station,
84 Mayton St, N7 6QT

MANCHESTER: CHORLTON

Why socialists oppose all borders

Wed 22 Mar, 7.30pm,
Chorlton Central
Church (Meeting Room),
Barlow Moor Rd,
M21 8BF

MANCHESTER: CITY CENTRE

Abortion under attack—why we defend a woman's right to choose

Thu 16 Mar, 7pm,
Friends Meeting House,
6 Mount St, M2 5NS

MANCHESTER: LONGSIGHT AND LEVENSHULME

Brexit—what do socialists say?

Thu 16 Mar, 7.30pm,
Inspire, 747 Stockport Rd,
M19 3AR

NEWCASTLE

The Grunwick strike—how migrant workers fought the bosses

Thu 16 Mar, 7pm,
Broadacre House,
Market St, NE1 6HQ

NORWICH

International Women's Day—how do we fight Trump?

Thu 16 Mar, 7.30pm,
Vauxhall Centre,
Johnson Place,
NR2 2SA

NOTTINGHAM

The war on benefits

Wed 22 Mar, 7.30pm,
International
Community Centre,
61b Mansfield Rd,
NG1 3FN

OXFORD

Here to stay, here to fight—how Asians transformed the British working class

Wed 22 Mar, 7.30pm,
Restore,
Manzil Way (off Cowley Rd),
OX4 1YH

POOLE AND DORCHESTER

Why socialists oppose all borders

Mon 20 Mar, 7.30pm,
Colliton Club,
Colliton House,
DT1 1XJ

PORTSMOUTH

Brexit—what do socialists say?

Wed 22 Mar, 7.30pm,
Somerstown
Community Centre,
River's St,
PO5 4EZ

SHEFFIELD: CITY CENTRE

A rebel's guide to Gramsci

Thu 16 Mar, 7pm,
Central United
Reformed Church,
60 Norfolk St (near
Crucible Theatre),
S1 2JB

SOUTHAMPTON

Disability, austerity and resistance

Wed 22 Mar, 7.30pm,
Central Baptist Church Hall,
Devonshire Rd, SO15 2GY

SWANSEA

From the Wobblies to Standing Rock—a history of struggle in the US

Thu 16 Mar, 7.30pm,
Brynmill Community Centre,
St Albans Rd, SA2 0BP

YORK

After the Copeland by-election—how can Corbyn win?

Wed 22 Mar, 7.30pm,
Sea Horse Hotel,
4 Fawcett St, YO10 4AH

MAY DAY GREETINGS



Every year, to mark International Workers' Day on 1 May, we print solidarity messages from readers, union branches and campaigns.

To get your May Day greetings in our 2017 supplement, please try and get your greeting to us by Wednesday 12 April

- £30 gets you one column
- £55 gets you two columns
- £95 gets you three columns
- ask us for larger greetings

contact: mayday@socialistworker.co.uk

CONTACT THE SWP

Phone 020 7840 5600

Email

enquires@swp.org.uk
Post PO Box 71327,
London SE11 9BW

My Country brings ordinary voices to the political stage

The National Theatre's play opens important debates about British society and its discontents—but at times it felt like a work in progress, writes **Lois Browne**

WITH SIX ballot boxes set up on tables towards the back of the stage, *My Country*—a work in progress immediately transports you back to 23 June.

Following the Brexit vote that day, members of the National Theatre conducted a nationwide series of interviews.

All the participants, aged from nine to 97 years old, were asked how they felt about Britain.

Segments of these intimate thoughts and opinions are interwoven into the dialogue of the play, along with the words of poet laureate Carol Ann Duffy.

At the beginning of the play, the patriotic symbol of Britannia calls a meeting of the regions.

The actors characterise Caledonia (Scotland), East Midlands, North East, Westminster, Cymru (Wales), Northern Ireland and South West.

Pictures

Meanwhile, pictures of the interviewees are held up as the debate goes from one region to another.

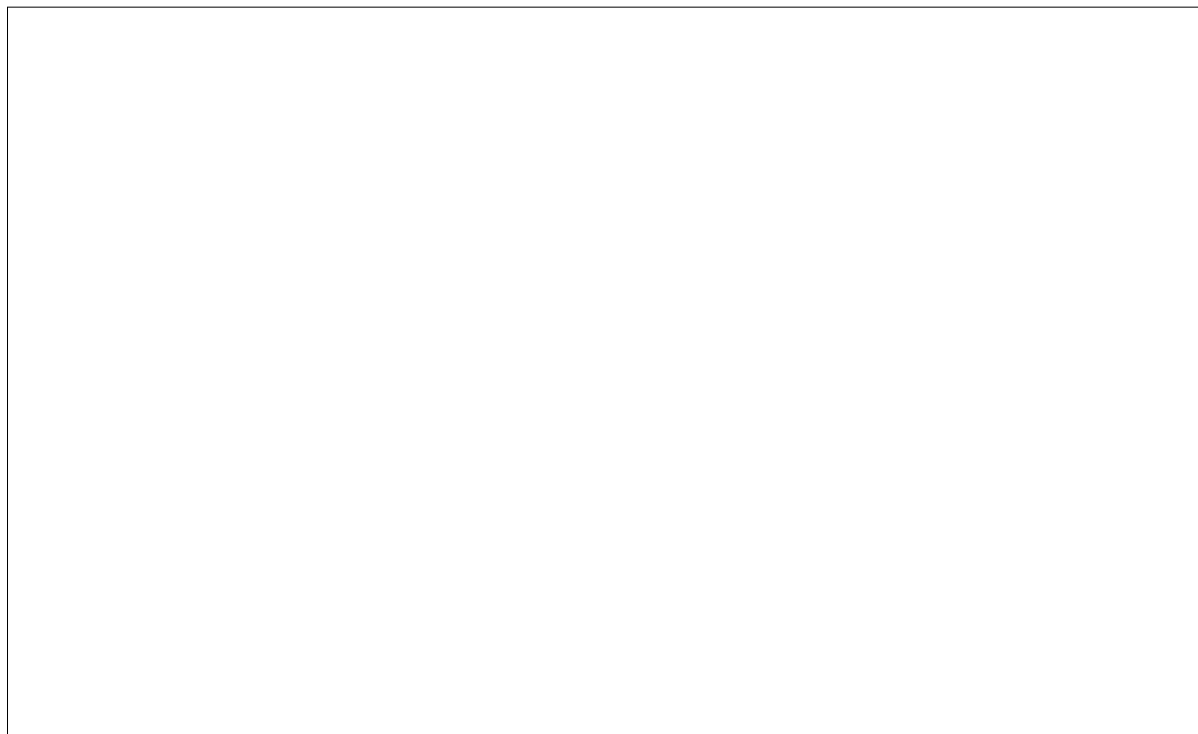
The quotes conjure up laughter, sometimes due to the sheer simplicity of what has been said or how outlandishly ridiculous a stereotype is.

Others bring about an uncomfortable silence among the audience because of their xenophobic and racist undertones.

The first contribution from Caledonia immediately opens up the conversation about ruling class power structures.

The interviewee recalls his school days, when he realised that he led a less privileged life.

Running at 90 minutes without an



'BRITANNIA' CALLS a meeting of the regions of Britain

interval, the production allows you to fully immerse yourself in the live discussion.

This sometimes culminates in confrontations between the different regions about their contrasting perceptions.

My Country—a work in progress successfully opens up the floor for an array of subjects to be discussed and contemplated

It covers political topics from the European Union (EU), housing, terrorism, class struggle, the refugee crisis in Syria and immigration. It

also raises social issues surrounding "Britishness", multiculturalism, othering and Islamophobia.

Decisions

The play also questions whether it is right for decisions of the whole country to be made by politicians in Westminster when they're so detached from ordinary people.

However, there is a segment of singing and dancing that feels purposely inserted to detract from the seriousness of the debate.

This slightly undermines the

importance of these complex subjects being discussed so openly.

It leaves us with the message that "we are far more united, than what divides us".

But it also showcases the increasing rise of populist racism, which seems to unfortunately become more engrained in our society.

My Country—a work in progress

Dorfman Theatre London SE1

Tickets from £15

Until 22 March, then touring across

Britain until 1 July

nationaltheatre.org.uk

THEATRE

ONE WAS NUDE AND ONE WORE TAILS

Hen & Chickens Theatre,

London N1 2NA.

Until 18th March

ONE WAS Nude and One Wore Tails is a farce where a rich man has to look for clothes on his journey home.

In doing so, he has to enlist the help of an impoverished road sweeper.

The production takes some swipes at the attitudes towards working class people and the myth of social mobility.

The richer characters collude in order to screw over the road sweeper protagonist. Having a police officer as the voice



Part of the cast

of social conscience in part contributes to the play's failure to pack a real punch.

Its attempts at social satire are also hampered by its somewhat two-dimensional portrayal of ordinary people.

That said, the play benefits from strong performances that fill the space almost to the point of claustrophobia.

The biggest laughs come from the slapstick nature of a naked man stuck inside a bin, which carries large sections of the farce.

Sarah Bates

TOP 5 BOOKS

Bestsellers at Bookmarks, the socialist Bookshop

- 1 **1917—Russia's Red Year**
Tim Sanders & John Newsinger
- 2 **A Rebel's Guide to Malcolm X**
Antony Hamilton
- 3 **Syria: revolution, counter-revolution & war**
Anne Alexander and Jad Bouharoun
- 4 **Born in the GDR: Living in the Shadow of the Wall**
Hester Vaizey
- 5 **Fascism—what it is and how to fight it**
Leon Trotsky

Phone 020 7637 1848
bookmarksbookshop.co.uk
Why not visit the shop at 1 Bloomsbury Street, London WC1B 3QE

A Bulgarian village where solidarity shone through

FILM

THE GOOD POSTMAN

Directed by Tonislav Hristov
Out now

THE GOOD Postman documentary is the true story of a missed opportunity.

In a poor Bulgarian village on the Turkish border, a mayoral election becomes a microcosm of the debate around refugees across Europe.

Some reacted with hostility when refugees began passing through.

Others saw in them

salvation as the village had dwindled to a tenth of its former size.

Ivan, the local postman, wants to revive it by bringing in young Syrian families. He walks past dilapidated houses to win his neighbours' votes.

His friend runs a rival campaign, offering right wing policies and a return to "Communism" as a solution to poverty.

Filmmaker Tonislav Hristov went there after seeing elderly women on the news helping refugees.

Many had once crossed the same border to flee



Ivan wants to welcome refugees

the Second World War.

The widows walk through a hole cut in the fence to visit their husbands' graves.

Refugees are constantly discussed, but rarely seen and never heard. Hristov said this uncomfortable absence is to tell the story "on the other side of the fence".

"When two people are having a conversation, I don't film the one who's talking but the one who's reacting," he said. "For me the reaction is the interesting part."

Fair enough, but

refugees must get to speak—and have the final say on where they settle.

Since the film was made a bigger wall has ended the influx.

Ivan's supporters saw refugees as "our only hope". Now the village seems doomed to decline while refugees languish in camps or drown.

But their story at least shows that a better outcome was possible—and that even in hard times ordinary people are as capable of solidarity as of racism.

Dave Sewell

PEOPLE across the political spectrum acknowledge that racism exists, but its origins are shrouded in mystery—deliberately so.

Racism is presented as if it has always existed, and individuals make a personal choice to be racist.

In reality racism was developed as a means of justifying the transatlantic slave trade, which was crucial for the birth of industrial capitalism.

According to one account of the “middle passage”—the journey across the Atlantic—the “height, sometimes, between decks, was only 18 inches.

“The unfortunate human beings could not turn around, or even on their sides, the elevation being less than the breadth of their shoulders.

“And here they are usually chained to the decks by the neck and legs. In such a place the sense of misery and suffocation is so great.”

Another account described the slave decks as “so covered with blood and mucus that it resembled a slaughterhouse”.

People killed each other to breathe, others threw themselves overboard to end their suffering.

For capitalists their profits were justification enough, but all this was publicly justified with the doctrine of “scientific” racism.

Nullify

By claiming that Africans were subhuman, it was designed to nullify the slavers’ crimes.

Other forms of slave society existed before the transatlantic slave trade. Despite their brutality, these were organised on a very different basis. There was no division based on skin colour or “race”.

In Ancient Greece there was a division between the “civilised” and the “barbarian”, a distinction which had nothing to do with race.

According to the historian Anthony Pagden “a barbarian was, before anything else... one who spoke not Greek but only ‘barbar’”. It was also possible to move across the divisions.

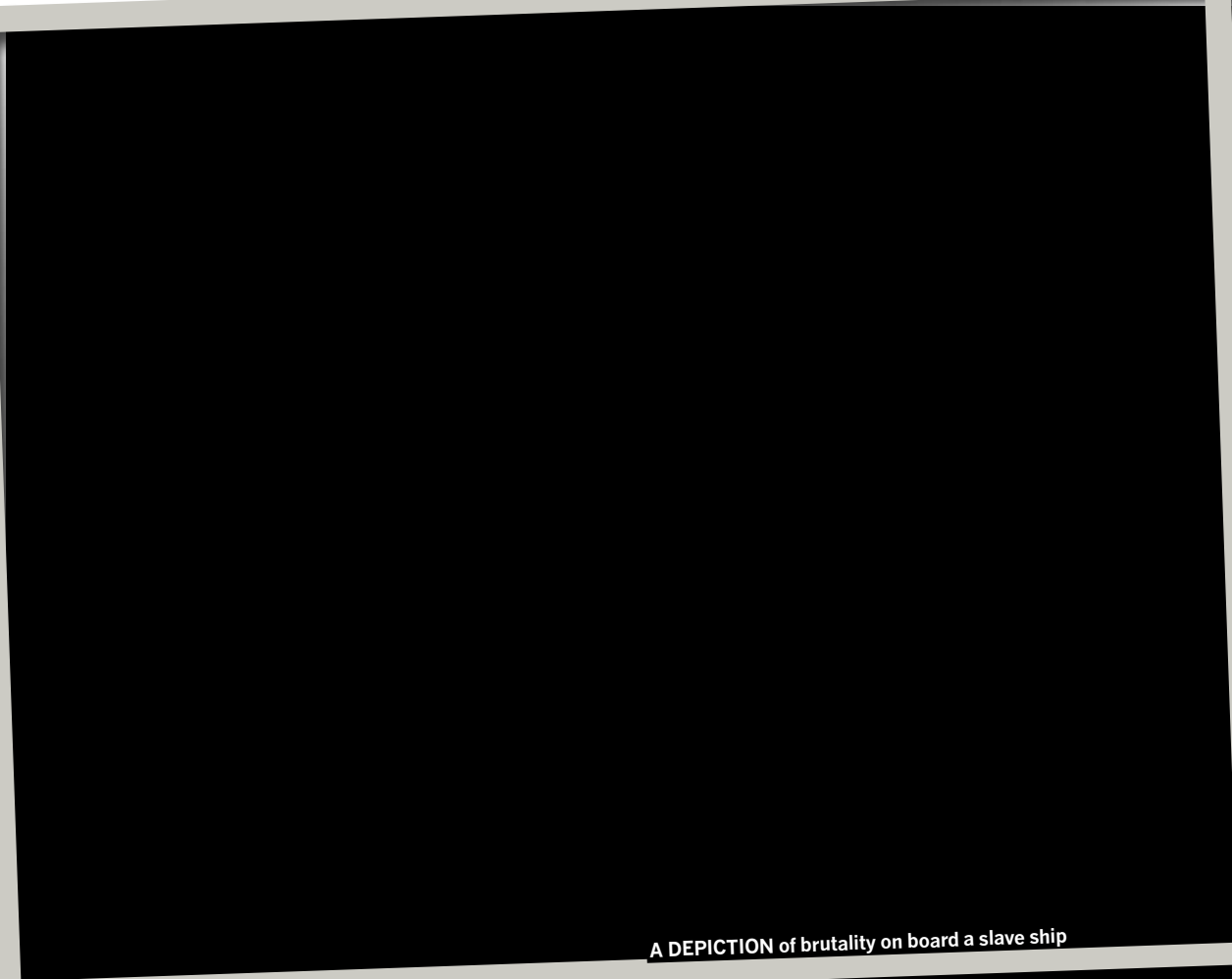
But “scientific” racism changed the rules by claiming there was something innate in black people that made them less than human.

Even during the early stages of the transatlantic slave trade in the 16th century, ways of justifying the enslavement of other people came after the fact.

Theological debates simmered while the conquistadors laid waste to South America.

When priests decided that slaves could be converted to Catholicism and released, they set off to the colonies only to be thrown overboard en route.

Spanish and Portuguese slavers were plundering riches from the colonies that were too



A SYSTEM BORN OF SLAVERY

Racism runs through modern society, but it hasn’t always existed. Author **Antony Hamilton** argues its roots lie in capitalism’s need to justify the transatlantic slave trade



Antony Hamilton, author of *A Rebel's Guide to Malcolm X*

valuable to relinquish.

A new merchant class was funding the wars of the feudal rulers of Spain and Portugal with blood-soaked gold and silver from South America.

There were tensions between these old and new worlds.

But they could coexist for the time being, especially with so much wealth to ease the friction.

Spanish emperor Charles V only stepped in to place limits on the bloodletting in 1542



All this was justified by the new doctrine of ‘scientific’ racism

after millions had died through murder and disease.

Even then he did not outlaw slavery outright. People from Africa continued to be transported.

Britain’s entry into the slave trade in around 1670 meant that it changed. It became an industrial operation.

In the first half of the 17th century, some 370,000 people were taken from Africa to the Americas as slaves. In the latter half, just under one

million were transported. At the peak, over 3.5 million were transported over the course of 50 years.

Marxist historian Robin Blackburn wrote, “The slavery of the New World permanently created, defined and embodied a violent subjugation of blacks by whites ... antipathy and unconcern was transmuted into fear and domination.”

Capitalism was already developing in Britain, but it’s no coincidence that it was the first country to undergo industrialisation.

As the revolutionary Karl Marx wrote, “Capital comes dripping from head to foot, from every pore, with blood and dirt.”

The transatlantic slave trade gave British capitalism an adrenaline shot and serious advantage over its competitors. Britain was in a prime position at one corner of the trade’s triangular route (see box, right).

The British ruling class lined its pockets with money exchanged for the lives of human beings.

A recent study by University College London found that one in five wealthy people had economically benefited from slavery at the height of the slave trade.

One slave owner, James Madison, described how he could make \$257 dollars off a slave in a year and spend as little as \$12 on keeping him alive.

RAW materials flooded into Britain from the plantations and cotton fields of the Caribbean and US.

People were forced into factory towns to deal with the massive influx of produce. Manufacturing cities such as Manchester and ports such as Liverpool and Bristol boomed.

The growth of exports accounted for 87 percent of the growth of output in the period 1784-86 to 1805-07.

By 1795 there were over a hundred slave ships registered in the port of Liverpool alone.

That represented half of the entire capacity of the European slave trade at the time.

The slave trade and the plantation economy had become central to the growth of British capitalism. They provided the spark that ignited the Industrial Revolution.

While this was happening, African societies were being sacked.

Europeans needed to back up their scientific explanations for Africans’ inhumanity with “proof” of their backwardness.

Cities were razed, infrastructure destroyed, libraries torn apart, universities burned to the ground.

That was all part of an effort to destroy any evidence that Africans had built societies that rivalled European ones.

Apart from the millions of people taken from Africa, the

slave trade had a devastating effect on those who were left. Some 25 to 30 million people were displaced in order to capture and transport 12 million.

At the time sub-Saharan Africa only had a population of 50 million people. The effect was felt for centuries afterwards.

European imperialists also created militaristic regimes.

People fought to sell their neighbours in the hope they would be spared.

Despite this people would unite and fight back after being captured and transported.

Because they were forced into disgusting conditions, the only thing they had left was to fight. You were either ground down and died or stood up and fought.

There were constant revolts and they were thoroughly documented because of the bureaucratic nature of the slave trade.

SLAVERS would document every time a slave died because they needed to be accounted for in the same way as any other property.

At the height of the slave trade there were revolts on a massive scale.

“Emancipation in the Americas was not achieved through the slow accumulation of concessions and customary rights,” argued Blackburn.

“It was marked by revolutionary ruptures, involving the action or reaction of the slaves themselves.”

Slavery was formally abolished after the US Civil War in 1865. But the ruling class still needed racism to fuel division, so their talk shifted from the “science” of race to the narrative of black people’s criminality.

As Michelle Alexander, author of *The New Jim Crow*, explained, “Former slaves and their descendants were arrested for minor violations, slapped with heavy fines, and then imprisoned until they could pay their debts.

“The only means to pay off their debts was through labour on plantations and farms—known as convict leasing—or in prisons that had been converted into work farms.”

This narrative continues today with ideas around black people and “gang culture”.

Since capitalism’s birth, it has used racism to fuel divisions that help maintain its rule. But

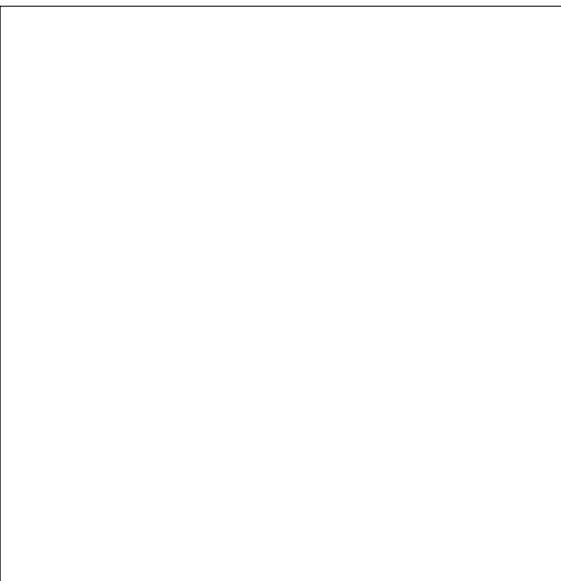
An industrial operation

● Slave ships set off from British and European ports with manufactured goods, textiles and weapons

● These slave ships then transported slaves across the Atlantic to the Americas, including the US, Caribbean and South America. Some 12 million were transported

● Once sold the ships brought back goods, including sugar, coffee, gold and tobacco. It was worth £43 million in 1820 and £80 million by 1860

See Socialist Worker’s map at bit.ly/2mJevLv



Many British cities’ wealth was built on the transatlantic slave trade. St Martin’s Bank building in Liverpool still has a fresco of two slaves

as capitalism developed, so did racism and who the ruling class’ main scapegoat was.

Scientific racism was largely discredited after the horrors of the Holocaust, when the Nazis murdered six million Jewish people and millions of others. Now racist discourse often focuses on people’s “culture” instead of “race”.

So, for instance, Muslims are blamed for their failure to “integrate” or hold “British values”, but this is mixed with older forms of racism.

Racism was born out of capitalism and the transatlantic slave trade—and capitalism continues to rely on it today.

As the revolutionary Malcolm X wrote, “You can’t have capitalism without racism.”

He was right. Our task is to get rid of both.

READ MORE

● **The American Crucible** by Robin Blackburn £14.99

● **A People’s History of the World** by Chris Harman £12.99

● **Capitalism and Slavery** by Eric Williams Online at bit.ly/1mXVv8t

● **A Rebel’s Guide to Malcolm X** by Antony Hamilton £3

Available at Bookmarks, the socialist bookshop. Phone 020 7637 1848 or go to bookmarksbookshop.co.uk



Simmering Petrograd was ready to boil over

Rapid capitalist development in Russian cities gave birth to a working class that dug the Tsar and capitalism’s grave

THE RUSSIAN working class was unique in 1917, in both its composition and position in global capitalism.

Rapid capitalist development in Russia had a profound impact on the shape of the working class as peasants rushed to the cities in search of work.

Workers were concentrated in industrial centres, such as Petrograd, that were among the most advanced in the world.

At the same time, this growing working class was drawn from the peasantry and retained deep ties to the land.

In 1908 half of single workers still owned land. This didn’t stop them being workers, but it meant that deep contradictions ran through the newly-forming class.

By 1918 that figure had dropped to 12.5 percent.

In western European countries, such as Britain, France and Holland, capitalism had developed over the course of centuries.

In Russia, this process was rapidly accelerated.

Population

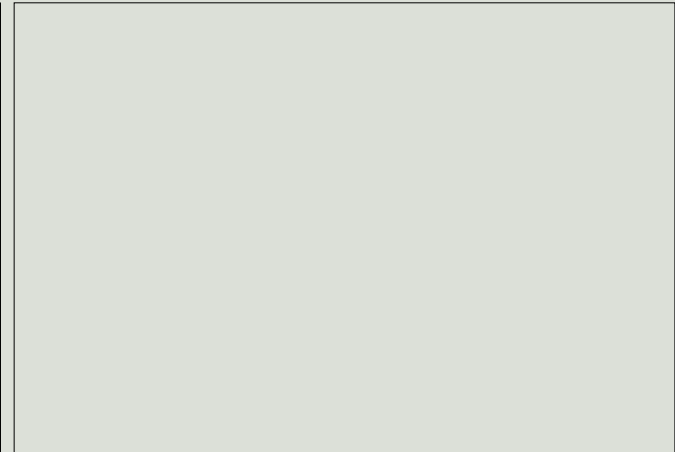
By 1917 there were “at least 18.5 million workers in the empire, about 10 percent of the population,” according to historian SA Smith.

Around two thirds of these had only recently begun working in industry.

In Petrograd there were 417,000 industrial workers and more than 70 percent were “in enterprises of more than 1,000 employees”.

The rapid expansion and concentration of the working class also had a rapid effect on workers’ ideas.

The conservatism that was associated with sections of the working class in advanced capitalist economies did not have the same purchase in Russia.



ARMED WORKERS in Petrograd

1917 TIMELINE

27 February (11 March in the modern calendar)

● Bolshevik party agitators visit the Volynsky Regiment to strike up a relationship

● By noon the soldiers decide to kill the commander of the company that fired on demonstrators the previous day

● By nightfall, 66,000 men of the Petrograd garrison had joined the striking workers—fully armed

Living conditions in the cities were brutal and conditions in factories were appalling. After a factory explosion killed five workers at the Okhta explosives factory, the director general Somov declared, “Such accidents happen and will keep on happening.

“I for one never enter the factory without first making the sign of the cross.”

Russian revolutionary Vladimir Lenin described the conditions necessary for a revolution. There must be a political crisis for the ruling class and “the suffering and want of the oppressed classes” should be “more acute than usual”.

This was true in Russia. As millions were conscripted to fight in the First World War, many industrial workers were spared this death sentence.

The most militant workers tended to be the most skilled, who were also less likely to be sent to the front.

Despite this 6,000 metal workers in Petrograd were conscripted. Bosses used it as a punishment for militants.

The conditions women suffered were even worse because on top of factory work they had to rear children and do domestic work.

Women

But women textile workers played a central role in the February Revolution, leading the strike movement that toppled the Tsarist dictatorship. By 1917 women made up almost exactly a third of the entire workforce in Petrograd.

The lived reality of workers in their industrial strongholds meant they knew what was at stake in the fight against the Tsar and Provisional Government that replaced him.

During the revolution workers’ councils (“soviets”) sprang up in villages, towns and cities to direct the revolution and run society.

Workers also understood the need to win the peasants to the revolution.

The Petrograd Soviet raised 65,000 roubles to send some 3,000 agitators into the countryside with literature to win over peasants to the revolution.

This workers’ self-organisation laid the basis for the second uprising in October 1917, when the working class seized power.

This is part of a series of weekly articles on the Russian Revolution. Read our coverage at tinyurl.com/sw1917

BA strikers hold mass airport pickets

by DAVE SEWELL and TONY HARPER

A COACHLOAD of striking British Airways (BA) cabin crew travelled from London Heathrow to Manchester Airport last Wednesday for a mass picket and mass meeting. Others went to Glasgow Airport.

It was the sixth day of the latest strike by up to 3,000 Unite union members in BA's "mixed fleet". The walkout ended last Thursday.

Workers are paid £12,192 a year plus a £3 an hour flying allowance.

The mood in Manchester was buoyant. Referring to a boss hated for the emails she sends to workers from the company, they chanted "mixed fleet are on fire—Karen Slinger's terrified".

Reballot

Workers defied the limit of 20 pickets imposed by airport management.

They also discussed ways to take the dispute forward in spite of harsh anti-union laws, tightened again just last week.

Unite gave BA seven days' notice for a reballot that could kick in just as their current mandate runs out.

Unite rep Gareth Theobald told



STRIKERS AT a mass picket in Manchester

PIC: TONY HARPER

Socialist Worker, "Our legal mandate runs out on 3 April. BA seems to think that means we'll be going away, but we're not."

Another rep explained, "The new ballot will also mean we can strike over the bonuses and staff travel perks that have been taken off us since the dispute began."

"We're currently seeking talks. But there's nothing to stop us calling new strike dates while the ballot is underway—we can do both things at once."

The dispute has seen 26 strike days since January, in walkouts that have become successively longer.

The longer it goes on the greater

the impact of understaffing on BA.

The busy Easter holidays period isn't far away. Already BA keeps having to draft in more rival firms to cover flights—as well as planes from its other fleets.

Planes are being crewed at the legal minimum level, with one report of a pilot having to join a pre-flight safety demonstration because there weren't enough crew.

And while BA's bank balance and reputation takes a hammering, solidarity from the wider movement helps the crew keep going.

Solidarity

"We've had a lot of messages of solidarity, I've another bag full of donations to count right now," said the rep. "Everyone seems to be behind us."

One striker spoke at the Socialist Workers Party rally in central London to mark the centenary of the Russian Revolution, and raised a bagload of donations.

This kind of support must continue. But what could really pile the pressure on BA is if the dispute spread. Mixed fleet workers' weak spot is that they operate only a minority of BA's planes.

Crew from its other fleets have sent strong messages that they

support them. Yet BA relies on them to mitigate the effect of the strike.

Turning that support into action is possible despite the laws banning "secondary action".

The rep explained, "Worldwide Fleet are having to cover a lot of our routes, more and more as the dispute goes on. They're not happy about doing this."

"It also means their rosters are being changed all the time. There's talk of going to the union and saying they're not happy about that either, and that could lead to industrial action."

"There are similar complaints in cargo and among the baggage handlers, they are not happy and that could lead to strikes."

"Of course you have to be careful to call it in a way that doesn't get classed as secondary action—but that's what the union has a legal team for."

As the mixed fleet crew's inspiring action goes on, so does its importance for the whole workers' movement. They're fighting a low pay economy and a Tory lockdown on industrial action.

To send messages and donations go to sites.google.com/view/mfunite/how-to-support

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Anti-sexist action fuels the fight to beat Trump

Activists tell Alistair Farrow how International Women's Day became a focus for the movement in the US

WOMEN ACROSS the US marked International Women's Day last Wednesday with a roar of defiance against sexism and Donald Trump.

A spokesperson for the International Women's Strike told Socialist Worker that over 60 events took place across the US.

"The strike went well from Fairbanks, Alaska, to New York City," they said. "There were hundreds of cities and campuses involved—the Bay Area, Chicago, and New York had extremely impressive mobilisations."

Trump has launched vicious attacks on women since coming into office little over a month ago.

He has threatened to defund women's health organisation Planned Parenthood of its £400 million federal funding if doesn't stop offering abortions.

Dawn Laguens from Planned Parenthood said, "Offering money to Planned Parenthood to abandon our patients and our values is not a deal that we will ever accept."

Some schools were shut down as part of the day. A statement from the CEO of public schools in Prince George's County, Maryland, said that "1,700 teachers and 30 per cent of transportation staff have requested leave".

Concept

Sharon Black from the Women's Fightback Network in Baltimore, Maryland, explained, "It's raising the concept of a strike, a general political strike and that's a key thing for workers, particularly those most oppressed."

The next test of the movement against Trump in the US is the mobilisation for protests on May Day, 1 May.

Crystal Gee from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, told Socialist Worker that "the local socialist organisations are planning to participate in the May Day strike".

Some on the right have attacked the strikes and protests as being led by a privileged few. "Tens of millions of women have neither the

BACK STORY

Donald Trump's bigotry and right wing policies have provoked a number of demonstrations

● There were huge protests against a travel ban on people from several Muslim countries

● After judges struck down the ban, a modified version was set to come into force on Thursday

● The movement against Trump began with a Women's March after his inauguration in January

● After International Women's Day protests last week the next planned day of action is May Day

benefits nor the flexibility to take the day off in protest," argued one typical magazine editorial.

Such arguments undermine calls for unity and don't put forward any solutions.

Heather Bradford from Duluth, Montana, argued for "increased unionisation and labour organising".

Darker

Bob Bland, national co-chair for the Women's March on Washington, spoke at a thousands-strong rally in New York City. "Today we are standing together in a much darker atmosphere than we did six weeks ago," she said.

A spokesperson from the LA Women's Strike told Socialist Worker, "The travel ban and the policy that separates mothers and children are exactly why we participate in the strike."

Sharon Black agreed, arguing that "it's critical that we build as much solidarity as possible with Muslim communities and with migrants".

"And what happens in Britain and what happens here are linked—capitalism is global, our bosses are the same."



What's your story?

Email with your ideas
reports@socialistworker.co.uk

WOMEN MIGRANT workers march in Washington DC

Thousands march in Ireland calling for an end to deadly anti-abortion law

by **ELEANOR CLAXTON-MAYER**

DUBLIN CAME to a standstill twice on International Women's Day as part of the fight for abortion rights in Ireland.

Some 3,000 people blocked the O'Connell Bridge for a Strike4Repeal protest at noon last Wednesday. Over 12,000 came out that evening as protests took place across Ireland.

Protesters were demanding a referendum on repealing the Eighth Amendment—a law that makes abortion illegal except when the woman's life is at serious risk.

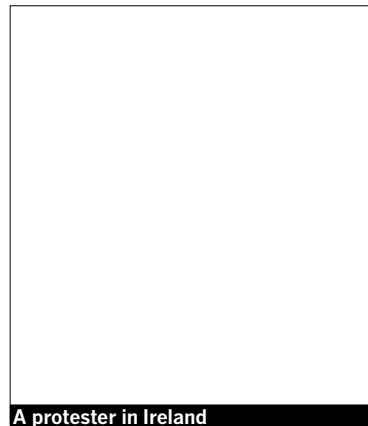
Referendum

The government has promised a referendum on the issue but has refused to name a date.

Thousands marched to the Dail parliament buildings in the evening.

Young and lively, the march saw women, men, children and whole families marching for a woman's right to choose.

Women stayed off work earlier that day or joined the midday protest during their lunch break—a tactic inspired by protests



A protester in Ireland

in Poland last year. Hundreds of students across Ireland also walked out of their lectures.

People Before Profit MP Brid Smith also tabled a bill in the Dail last week to effectively decriminalise abortion.

It sought to reduce the punishment for having an abortion from 14 years in prison to a symbolic one euro fine.

Brid Smith also joined the protests outside the Dail.

"Marching down to the bridge, you couldn't move for the hundreds of students coming

out of Trinity College to join the protest," she told Socialist Worker. "It was an inspiration and it's a very strong movement."

Protests took place across Ireland in cities such as Limerick, Waterford and Kilkenny.

There were also solidarity protests in Britain, including in Oxford, Cambridge and Aberdeen. A solidarity protest in London saw over 700 people demonstrating outside the Irish embassy.

Anger over the abortion laws has been brewing for years in Ireland.

Pill

An estimated 12 women a day travel to Britain from the whole of Ireland for a safe and legal abortion—a trip that can cost almost £900. Three women a day purchase the abortion pill online illegally.

It is essential that women are able to access safe abortions.

Brid Smith said, "We will definitely get a referendum."

"But the people who have come out in force to today are not going to sit back and accept any restrictions the government try to impose."

● More on socialistworker.co.uk

EDUCATION

FURTHER EDUCATION

PICTURE: DUNCAN BROWN

HIGHER EDUCATION

CIVIL SERVICE WORKERS

The lobby was called off when bosses put a new offer on the table.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT WORKERS

Durham and Derby TAs won't be beaten

by RAYMIE KIERNAN

TEACHING assistants in Derby and Durham are gearing up to march in Durham on Saturday 25 March in a national show of solidarity in their fights against Labour pay cuts.

The Unison union members in Derby began another ten days of strikes last Monday. Derby City Council slashed their pay by 25 per cent last summer and the TAs have been fighting back since.

Derby Unison is currently in talks with council chiefs, which it said were at a "critical and sensitive stage". But there was still no sign of an acceptable offer as Socialist Worker went to press.

The union is laying on transport to march alongside Durham TAs next Saturday.

Unison activists from branches around Britain are also organising delegations for the Durham march.

It will be staged less than six weeks before local elections that could become a referendum on the Labour-run county council and its attempts to sack and rehire TAs and slash their pay by 23 percent.

That attack is on hold for talks that have dragged out



DURHAM TEACHING Assistants at the Miners Hall

PICTURE: @DURHAMTASVALUEUS

for three months since strikes were suspended in December. Many TAs are getting restless and want to see an end to the uncertainty.

A massive march next week can increase the pressure on Labour ahead of the elections but TAs should also exert pressure inside the

majority Unison union.

Strikes forced the council to suspend the attack last year, as pressure built inside Labour Party ranks after the TAs year-long campaign culminated in solid walkouts.

The threat of more strikes coupled with political pressure ahead of the

elections could be enough to tip the scales.

●Durham solidarity march assemble Sat 25 March, 12 noon, Gala Square, Durham DH1 1SQ. Facebook Durham Teaching Assistants Value Us campaign and Unison-Derby City Branch for more information

UNITE UNION

Bring left candidate Ian Allinson to work

by IAN BRADLEY

AS THE Unite union's general secretary election looms closer, socialist candidate Ian Allinson is out campaigning in workplaces.

Allinson is also busy preparing for a strike in his Fujitsu workplace. He's the only rank and file candidate.

Ian toured London bus garages last Friday. Over the coming weeks he will be going to other cities, visiting Unite workplaces and holding meetings for activists.

The campaign plans to have a stall at the Stand Up To Racism demonstration in London on Saturday.

Ian calls for defending freedom of movement for European Union migrants.

Incumbent Len McCluskey equivocates on it. Right wing union bureaucrat Gerard Coyne wants to end it.

The campaign had a brilliant response at the NHS demo earlier this month.

A lot of members don't know Ian is standing. Some don't even know there's an election on. This campaign is an opportunity to engage with them and shake up the union from below.

To get involved, invite Ian to your workplace and hand out leaflets. Ian is taking leave from work to campaign and is on strike. Any donations will be gratefully received.

●Go to ian4unite.org for more information.

NUCLEAR WORKERS

Pension fight

WORKERS AT the Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) have called eight further strike days this spring.

Bosses closed their defined benefit pension scheme in January, replacing it with a weaker scheme. This has cost workers thousands of pounds.

Their union Unite demands that they are allowed to join the civil service pension scheme.

IT WORKERS

WORKERS AT IT Services firm Fujitsu are set to strike across Britain on Friday, days before the first of 1,800 planned job cuts begin on Monday.

The Unite union members are fighting to defend jobs and stop compulsory redundancies.

They are also fighting to win union recognition, compensation for pension cuts and better pay.

It follows a dispute at Fujitsu's Manchester office around similar demands.

TRANSPORT

Still not fare

SOUTH YORKSHIRE Freedom Riders are going back on the trains to celebrate their third anniversary.

Elderly and disabled people lost their right to travel free on local trains in South and West Yorkshire in 2014.

For several weeks elderly and disabled people travelled to Meadowhall for rallies, refusing to pay. On 9 May the South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive announced a U-turn.

A rally will be held outside Barnsley interchange at 10.45 on 27 March before travelling to the rally in Sheffield.

Some people were scared off by the attack by British Transport Police on two campaigners in June 2014.

Our rally will show that we are back on the tracks.

George Arthur

BUS WORKERS

Action stops

THE UNITE union has suspended strikes by Oxford Bus Company workers planned for Friday and next Monday.

Workers previously struck twice this month over bosses' refusal to pay them premium rates for working two bank holidays.

Unite general secretary Len McCluskey, who is campaigning for re-election, visited the picket line and pledged to double their strike pay. Further strikes have been suspended for talks.

HOUSING CAMPAIGNS

March for Homes takes on Tory cuts

HOUSING activists have called a national demonstration for 24 June to go on the offensive against Tory attacks on social housing.

Last year 10,000 people protested against the Tory Housing and Planning Bill, which now lies in tatters.

Now activists are taking the fight to the Tories.

The march will demand councils reverse estate redevelopment projects.

These will mean demolitions of council houses and housing association homes.

The demonstration will also mobilise private renters' organisations.

A mobilising meeting is planned for 27 March.

●For more information go to bit.ly/1tvnlad



One of the Haringey estates set to be demolished

■PROTEST AGAINST Southwark council's regeneration plans has been called for 25 March.

The Southwark Plan has lined up multiple estates for redevelopment in south London. Labour councils should resist Tory cuts. If not, campaigns can force them to.

●Monday 20 March, 7pm, Save our Homes and Schools public meeting, St Paul's and All Hallows School, N17 0TU

■HARINGEY COUNCIL is set to demolish a school and build an academy in its place as part of the £2 billion regeneration in the borough.

Campaigners have called a public meeting to organise against the plans.

●Monday 20 March, 7pm, Save our Homes and Schools public meeting, St Paul's and All Hallows School, N17 0TU

CINEMA WORKERS

Picturehouse dispute grows

WORKERS AT the Picturehouse cinema chain are set to strike on Saturday as part of an ongoing dispute over maternity pay and the Living Wage.

Workers at the Brighton branch will be coming out on strike for the first time.

There are now five sites involved in the strike—with more in the pipeline as the campaign spreads.

Workers from all the four London sites are travelling down to Brighton in solidarity with the new strikers.

"New people have joined the union since the last strikes," Picturehouse Central rep Andrea told Socialist Worker.

"The campaign is going from strength to strength," he said.

CLEANERS

Strike to mop up the bosses

CLEANERS AT the London School of Economics were set to strike on Wednesday and Thursday. It comes as part of their long running campaign to get equal pay and conditions as other workers at the university.

Workers currently get statutory sick pay, which means for the first three days they are ill they receive nothing.

After that they get just £88.45 a week.

They are also demanding the reinstatement of sacked colleague Alba Pasmino.

●Donate to the cleaners' strike fund at uvwunion.org.uk/justiceforlsecleaners.

Email j.black@lse.ac.uk to demand the cleaners be given the same pay and conditions as other workers

RAIL STRIKE FOR SAFETY AND JOBS

by RAYMIE KIERNAN

OVER HALF of Northern Rail services and 80 per cent of Merseyrail services were cancelled on Monday in the latest walkouts by train guards.

The action is over passenger safety, jobs and workers' conditions.

It deserves the support of everyone who wants to see a safe rail service come before profit.

Northern and Merseyrail RMT union members joined their Southern rail counterparts for a day of coordinated strikes against driver only operation (DOO).

Around one million journeys were hit by the action of 2,000 guards and drivers from the north east of England to the south coast.

Merseyrail bosses were also hit hard by a great show of solidarity from Aslef union drivers who refused to cross picket lines.

In Leeds Aslef drivers joined more than 20 RMT pickets from 4am.

Passengers were receptive to the strikers' leaflets explaining the case for keeping guards on the train.



PICKETS IN confident mood at Leeds station

PICTURE: NEIL TERRY

Leeds TUC brought its banner to show solidarity. There was a confident mood as just one scab crossed the picket line and up to 8am no trains ran.

The picture was mirrored in Hull with a large picket buoyed by support from other workers at the station, including drivers.

Local Labour MP for East Hull, Karl Turner, visited the picket line.

RMT branch secretary Peter March said members were angry that Northern had refused to guarantee a guard on every train.

Pickets were also out at Wigan Wallgate where supporters included the trades

council and Momentum.

The walkouts are an important development in the fight against DOO.

Rail bosses are looking to boost profits by getting rid of safety critical guards and piling all safety responsibility onto drivers' shoulders.

It could be worth as much as £350 million to the fat cats.

Guards are trained in many safety areas and trains generally cannot move without them.

Their importance was underlined when several people were injured after a fire on board a rush hour train in east London last month.

The Evening Standard newspaper wrote, "Witnesses

described scenes of 'sheer terror and panic' after smoke started filling an Overground train at Dalston Kingsland station."

The train was DOO. A guard would have ensured the train was evacuated in a controlled and orderly way.

Victor, an RMT guard on Southern, was pleased that action against DOO was spreading as Southern guards held their 30th strike day.

But he also said the union should have opened new fronts against the bosses earlier.

He told Socialist Worker, "We should have done this a long time ago, we know bosses want DOO everywhere."

Increasing the political pressure with wider mobilisations is now crucial.

Victor argued, "The unions should call a national march—it could pull people together. We just had one for the NHS and look how big that was."

He's right. More strikes backed by public protests can roll back DOO and strengthen the case to renationalise the railways.

Thanks to everyone who sent reports

Guard faces jail even though bosses cleared him

DOZENS OF RMT union reps with banners protested outside Liverpool Crown Court last week with family and friends of Martin Zee.

He is a Merseyrail guard accused of endangering passengers by "wilful omission or neglect".

The trial relates to an incident in July 2015.

A passenger boarding a train at Wirral's Hamilton Square station fell from a platform and suffered head injuries.

After the accident happened, Martin acted quickly to shut off the electricity supply and then went onto the track to

assist the injured person.

Yet the Crown Prosecution Service is carrying out a prosecution that could see Martin jailed for two years.

This is despite Merseyrail taking no action against him following an internal investigation.

Merseyrail's report



Picketing the court last week

PICTURE: RMT GLASGOW SHIPPING

"proved his innocence beyond doubt," said RMT general secretary Mick Cash.

Merseyrail customer service head Stephen Dodd, gave evidence to the court that Martin would not have been able to see the passenger who was injured.

This was due to blind spots on the guard's monitors and the curved platform.

Such factors show that instead of cutting guards there need to be more staff to ensure safety.

It will be a travesty of justice if Martin Zee is jailed.

Privatisation's a con—official

THE TRANSPORT select committee's latest report into rail privatisation admits "it has not yielded all the competitive benefits initially envisaged by the government in the early 1990s".

In fact it has failed on every level. Journeys are slower and more overcrowded than publicly owned services in Europe.

Fares have risen by an average of 117 percent and subsidies by 300 percent since privatisation in 1995.

Big firms have milked this scam for over two decades.

Laughing all the way to the bank

The top five companies took £3 billion from us between 2007 and 2011, made profits of £504 million and gave 90 percent of it to shareholders. Last year alone the rail fat cats grabbed nearly £5 billion.